

TRANSCEND

Volume 2 - Issue 1

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Petrichor

Exclusive article by Ayesha Khattak (page 94)

WHO BURNT THE
QURAN- THEM OR
Us? Page 6

*Learn to manage your
time through*

DAILY DEEDS Page 26

Transcend

Page 72

Remembering the
FORGOTTEN ONES
Page 45

*Let's gear up for the fight
against*

THE REAL ENEMY

Page 18

BUILDING A FAMILY
REGAINING THE GLORY

Page 34

ISLAM'S LEGACY TO THE WEST

Page 85

*So you want to measure the
strength of my emaan by
the length of my beard?*

Page 57



Every day, on her way to the school, she would see him sitting under the willow tree. On a ragged cloth, whose color could not be deciphered under the layers of dust upon it, he had spread his armament of broken shoes, soles, laces and glue. He would sit in the sweltering heat, his amputated leg supported on a rolled piece of cloth, mending and polishing shoes. For years since he lost his leg in a car accident, he had been employed in the same profession. The little girl, strolling down the street with her nanny, would be taken in by the precision and concentration with which he did his work. She would wonder; why does he have to strive so much while her parents could earn their livelihood so easily.

One day, she decided to bring some food to the poor cobbler. She told her nanny to pack an extra sandwich for her lunch. On the way back, she stopped over at the cobbler's and took out her lunchbox.

Opening the lid, she extended it towards the cobbler. "This is for you".

The cobbler, taken aback, looked up at the little girl. Tears welled up in his eyes.

She asked, "Why doesn't Allah do something about you?"

He replied, moved by the little girl's innocence, "He did. He sent you."

(Inspired from, Mirza Yawar Baig's "Aklhaq of the Ummati")

Since many of you reading this magazine are medical students, doctors or in allied health sciences, I would ask you a simple question: do you feel you were a better person before the medical profession sucked you in? If your answer is yes, let me assure you are not the only one in this quagmire. It's ironic, that though the medical profession teaches us empathy as its basic virtue, competition and professionalism has the capacity to drain our empathies and moralities. With time, the desire to do good deeds ebbs away. This applies not only to medicine but other professions as well have the tendency to nibble away our compassion.

However, all is not in vain. When you hear someone say that Islam is the *complete* code of life, take a minute to ponder over it.

وَالْعَصْرِ ﴿١﴾ By the Time. (Do you find yourself complaining about not having enough time to manage your profession, studies and hasanaat)

إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لِفِي خُسْرٍ ﴿٢﴾ Verily man is in loss. (By default, we are in loss...but..wait for it..)

إِلَّا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَّصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ﴿٣﴾ But those who believed and did good deeds and stressed one another to accept truth and counseled one another to be steadfast.

In this beautiful ayah lies the answer to our problems. All our efforts, medical professionalism and top-line acumen amounts to nothing if we do not embody the four traits mentioned in the last ayah of Surah Asr:

- Believe
- Do good deeds
- Enjoin truth
- Enjoin patience

Perspective matters and it is important that we build ours the right way. I highlighted these qualities particularly because we are well-versed in our obligations but have a tendency to overlook enjoining truth and patience. Therefore, I request the reader to read the magazine with the intention of not only gaining hidayah but also becoming channels of goodness for others, i.e. become people who inculcate the qualities mentioned in Surah Asr.

I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of everyone, from the editors, designers and proofreaders to writers and SSS executives, who contributed towards Transcend. For all those who made dua, your reward lies with Allah SWT alone. The following deserve a special mention for their contribution: Hasan Baig, Sabeena Malik, Anem J Nawaz, Jamal Farooq Khattak, Rishtya Meena Kakar, Khawla Haider, Dr Ghulam Haider, Dr Amir Nazeer.

- Sara Haq

The magazine has been divided into the following sections:

Beyond the Self

Encompasses outreach and society issues

Potential Unleashed

Stories about personal development and tips/advice on how to improve oneself in any aspect

Eye Inside

Reflections

Soul Speak!

Unique or non-conventional articles

Chronicle Charm

Actual stories with a lesson; fables

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All good in this magazine is from Allah SWT and imperfections and faults are due to us

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Beyond the Self

Who burnt the Quran- Them or Us?	6
I love Muhammad (SAW)	9
The Young Pakistanis	10
Muslim College Life: Dating, Drinking and Deen!	15

Potential Unleashed

Understanding Gheebah	17
The Real Enemy	18
The Designer Fever	22
Fashion Police	24
Daily Deeds	26
Will you marry me?	28
Hook up with Allah, Allah will hook you up	30
The Answer to Our Problems	32
Building a Family, Regaining the Glory	34
The Struggle	40
Tips to Maintain Good Relations with People Around You.....	42

Eye Inside

Greeting the Unknown	44
Forgotten Ones	45
Welcome to Duniya	47
The Path to Paradise	49
Finding Faith	50
Some Summer	52
Love and Desire	53
Why are Our Youth Feeling a Deep Appreciation for Atheism?	54
Why it cannot be chance?	56

An-Nawwās ibn Sam‘ān reported that the Prophet (ﷺ) said:
 “Righteousness is good character and sin is whatever bothers you
 and you do not want people to know about.”¹

عَنْ النَّوَّاسِ بْنِ سَمْعَانَ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ (ﷺ) قَالَ: «الْبِرُّ حُسْنُ الْخُلُقِ وَالْإِثْمُ
 مَا حَاكَ فِي نَفْسِكَ وَكَرِهْتَ أَنْ يَطَّلَعَ عَلَيْهِ النَّاسُ» رَوَاهُ مُسْلِمٌ

So you want to measure the strength of my emaan by the length of my beard?	57
The Ultimate Buzz	60
Matters of Faith	61
Singing to the Winds	62
Tawakkul	63
Eternal Sleep	64
You have to choose	66
7 Simple Tips to Recharge Your Brain	67

Soul Speak!

From Apes or From the Heavens	68
Quotable Quotes	71
Transcend	72
Khutbaat	75
SIST winning essay 2012	77
Mosques: A Journey through Time	79
Expensive Scent	82
Describing the Indescribable	83
Islam's Legacy to the West	85
On Being a Man	89
The Last Day on Earth	92

Chronicle Charm

Petrichor	94
Ten things that result in Allah's love	96
Goodness to Parents	97
The 250 miles journey	98
The Daughter	103
A quarter too much change.....	105
SIST 2013 theme	106

*When a
man dies,
his deeds
come to an
end except
for three
things:*

1.
**Sadaqah
Jariyah**
(ceaseless charity)

2.
**Knowl-
edge
which is
benefi-
cial**

3.
**Virtuous de-
scendant who
prays for him**
(the deceased)



It's not even a bit uncommon among Muslims that if you went to their houses and they made you sit in their drawing rooms, you would see a book wrapped in the best of cloths sitting at the top of the highest shelf there. If you were to ask them what it was they would say, 'That's the Qur'an, the best of books, the book of Allaah Azzawajal. We respect it so much that we've put it as high as we can.'

WHO BURNT THE QURAN

Let me give you my own introduction of this book first.

IMAD UD DIN SAQIB

SIST subhead

Class of 2016

Shifa College of Medicine

This was the book that was sent down to the most ignorant of people, the Arabs, a people whom the superpowers of that time didn't want to rule because of their ignorance. It transformed these Arabs to the extent that they became the rulers of more than half of this world in about 20 years after the completion of this book, making them amongst the world's most ideal people.

- THEM OR US?

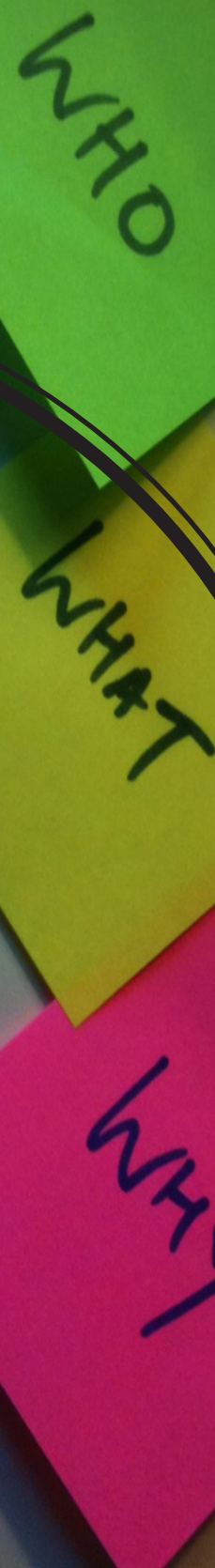
We say that this book was revealed by Allaah Azzawajal and we love it from the bottom of our hearts, more than we could ever love any other book. Yet, what do we do when it gets insulted and a Christian priest burns it? Nothing. Just a few protests? We come out on the streets, break our own banks' windows, burn our own shops and destroy our own things? Why is that so? That's because we've already been burning the Quran ourselves or doing something even worse- abandoning and not following it. Most of the non-Arab Muslims do not even know how to read it. Worse still, the majority of those who do know do not understand the meaning. Is that what the Qur'an was for?

The Quran was for practicing but we've abandoned it. We still claim that we respect it but what kind of respect is this. Is the implementation of the Qur'an in the lives of the kuffaar any more than its implementation in our lives? Do you not think that we will be asked by Allaah Azzawajal on that Day, the day when there will be no shade except the shade of the throne of Allaah Azzawajal and the people will be like scattered moths, that were we also with the Kuffar, abandoning the book of Allah?

Long gone has the time in which the recitation of the Qur'an would be heard from the houses of the Muslims or the time when the first words on the tongue of a Muslim child were from the Qur'an. Long gone has the time when mothers would send their children to Qur'an classes; the time in which the knowledge of the Qur'an used to be thought of as the best! Now, neither do we look for solutions to our individual and collective problems from the Qur'an nor are the decisions in courts made according to it.

Instead what has replaced it? Songs and music? Worse still, man-made laws. We hire a Qur'an tutor for our children but we tell him not to take more than half an hour. The child has got a lot of homework from school, the centre of worldly knowledge. And what do we tell the science tutor? Do not take less than 2 hours, the child has a test tomorrow and we do not want him to fail. Which test is greater, the science test or the test of the hereafter?

When the Quran tutor comes, we tell him to finish his teaching in 5 minutes or in as little time





as possible and yet when the science tutor decreases his teaching time by 5 minutes, we start scolding him and threaten him that we're going to decrease his salary!

Then we hold up our hands in prayer asking for all the stuff we want, saying that Allah is the one who answers everything but do we really expect our prayers to be answered and for Allah Azzawajal to be pleased with us? By Allah, our prayers will NEVER get answered as long as we continue this degradation of the Qur'an!

We desire the victory Allaah Azzawajal promised to the Muslims but will we ever achieve it in this situation. Mark my words- we will never be able to succeed if we continue abandoning the Quran the way we are now. Our heedless actions have led to serious moral deficits. In the world today, I look for the kind of mothers who brought up Salaahuddeen Ayyubi and Nooruddeen Zangi or those who brought up Saifuddeen Qutuz? I implore your reasoning. With our current state of affairs, can we expect the mothers of today to raise the likes of the companions Talha and Zubair, or the scholars Ibn Tamiyyah and Ibn Mubarak?

Where are the eyes which fill with tears and the hearts which fill with terror on hearing the recitation of the Qur'an? Where are the ones who stay up at night out of fear of Allaah Azzawajal? Where are those who claim to love Allaah Azzawajal and His messenger and are prepared to die for His cause? Where are those who claim to be true Muslims?

'Why is it that when you are told to march for the cause of Allaah, you seem to linger at home. Have you given preference to the worldly life over the life of the hereafter? The worldly gains compared to those of the next life are but very little. If you do not march for His cause, He will afflict you with a painful punishment and replace you by another nation and your (destruction) will not harm Him at all. God has power over all things.' (9:38-39)

When I think about the recent uproar on burning of the Quran, I realize that the Kuffaar cannot erase the Qur'an and they cannot lower the rank of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). They know this! They know that they might be able to burn 10,000 copies of the Quran but they will never be able to erase it from the hearts of the Huffaaz. By defaming our religion, they only test how much Imaan is in us. And that's exactly what Allaah Azzawajal wants too. He wants to test us to see who will remain loyal to Him and who will turn back on his heels.

'Do people think they will not be tested because they say, "We have faith?" We had certainly tried those who lived before them to make sure who were truthful in their faith and who were liars. Do the evil-doers think they can escape Us? How terrible is their judgment?' (29:2-4)

Verily, falsehood is bound to perish just as it perished after the advent of Islam 1400 years back. But will we be amongst the ones who cause

Allah's religion to reign
su-





preme? What do we do when the Quran is burnt? We protest and we organize rallies. O Muslims! Do you not understand that protesting is the methodology of the cowards? Do you not understand that this is the easy and useless way out? Our leaders join us too but do you seriously think that protesting will stop this rubbish? Will we get anything more than an apology and then the same stuff happening again? Do we expect our enemies to hand us those who attempted such a thing for execution or execute them themselves? Is there any government who can challenge the governments of such people and threaten them with their aircrafts and missiles? Is there anyone who can show them a living Qur'an? A Qur'an which attacks when it is insulted or when its leader, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), is insulted! A Qur'an which defends the honor of the Muslims and protects them!

Verily, the one who tries to implement this and make himself Shaytaan-proof will know how hard it is!

'Is it not time for the hearts of the believers to become humbled by the remembrance of Allah and by the Truth which has been revealed so that they will not be like the followers of the Bible who lived before them and whose hearts have become hard like stone through the long years. Many of them are evil doers.' (57:16)

And surely if you try this, you will find yourself being attacked from all sides because we cannot even tolerate the small sunnahs of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), his appearance or the appearance of his companions. Salaah, which was the coolness of the eyes of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH), has become the irritation of our eyes. We cannot tolerate anything Islamic.

But if you, O strange believer, persist on your path, you will never be forsaken. Remember that the one whose pleasure is to be sought is Allaah Azzawajal and no one else.

'Who is he besides the Most Gracious that can

*Sahih Bukhari Volume 9, Book 92,
Number 382*

Narrated 'Abdullah: The best talk (speech) is Allah's Book 'Quran), and the best way is the way of Muhammad, and the worst matters are the heresies (those new things which are introduced into the religion); and whatever you have been promised will surely come to pass, and you cannot escape (it).

be an army to you to help you? The disbelievers are in nothing but delusion!' (67:20)

And you will be faced by the severest of tests and if you succeed in that, you will get what no eye has ever seen, what no ear has heard and what no brain has ever thought of- Jannah and the pleasure of Allaah Azzawajal! And you will notice that whenever your hands go up for something, they never return except that Allaah Azzawajal gives you what you want or something better than what you wanted! Tell those who mock you to dream on for surely they will never succeed!

'Those who persecute the believing men and women without repenting will suffer the torment of hell and that of the burning fire. As for the righteously striving believers, they will live in Paradise wherein streams flow. This is the greatest triumph.' (85:10-11)



I Love Muhammad (SAW)

OMER SHAHID

Final Year

GIKI

True or not, I won't judge your "Love",
But know that you're being watched by the One above.

At Fajr Salah you are hardly awake,
But doing violent protests is a piece of cake.
Muhammad (SAW) was sent as a mercy to humanity,
But we, we have crossed all bounds of sanity!

He respected the life and property of others,
Protecting the honor of daughters, sisters and mothers.

We claim to love him, but is it for real?
Since instead of following him, we break stuff and we steal!

Everyone got offended; every Muslim got hurt,
Blasphemers were defended; our homes were burnt!
Would Muhammad (SAW) love this? I wish we only knew,
While not everyone, but it might stop a few.

The ones busy sucking the blood of their own brothers dry,
Claim, "We WILL protest, whether you live or you die!"

How is this love, if you leave someone weeping?
Our minds are furious but our hearts are sleeping.

I wish we would wake up and learn about him (SAW) more,
Before the time comes when on this earth we will be no more.

When angels will come to our grave and ask "What do you know about this man?"
We will start to stammer and try to answer what we can.

If your love was true, then you will surely reply,
But if it was not, then know that you will cry.

So it's time to act NOW and KNOW about this Great Man!
Adopt his qualities, at least, whatever we can!

Allah will surely love you, if you love His most beloved slave,
From the torment of Hell, by His will, you will be saved.

I wish people would understand the true meaning of Love,
Since obedience with sincerity, is the only thing that matters above.



A little scruffy boy runs up to his teacher, Mr. Fahmeed (who happens to be a student himself at Shifa), gives him a hearty hug, and says, “Sir aap hamaray leyaeh bohat kuch kartay hain!”

Each and every one of us deep inside has a quiet ember. This is the desire inside each of us to help and better our community. “We all want to help one another, human beings are like that. We want to live by each other’s happiness, not by each other’s miseries.”- Charley Chaplin. This deep and silent ember can be kindled and nursed into a fire. This is the burning heart that causes us to do good works, and to help others. If this fire inside of us is strong enough,

sive education, beginning at an early age.

This is where my story begins. I was aware of the problems facing our country, and since many years, I wanted to fix these problems. I was willing to educate our youth and play my role as a Muslim and a Pakistani, for the betterment of our community. But as it is said, “Know-

The Young Pakistanis

YOUSAF AJAM

CLASS OF 2015

SHIFA COLLEGE OF
MEDICINE

it can rapidly spread and set ablaze the whole world with feelings of wanting to help fellow men. Even the largest fires are caused by the most silent of embers. This can be enough to not only change our community but cause change in the world.

Pakistan has a lot of inherent problems and is a country far from being perfect. From what it was meant to be when it was made, and what it is today are two very distant things. In my opinion, the root cause of nearly all the problems that Pakistan faces today can be attributed to unavailability of good education. Be it poverty, an unjust judicial system or corruption, all are caused by ignorance (jihalat). How can a country hope to select a suitable leader when such a significant part is uneducated? When our leaders themselves emerge from those significant parts of the society, what are the chances that they have the capabilities to lead a country? One of the best ways to remove ignorance (jihalat) from a community is through good and inten-

ing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.”- Goethe. I knew the problems, and was willing to do something about them and take a stand against ignorance (jihalat); all I needed was an opportunity.

The opportunity presented itself a few months after I joined Shifa College of Medicine. A couple of my friends had been going to an orphanage nearby, where they would interact with, and try to educate the children there. I became interested in what they were doing, and asked if I could accompany them the next





time they went, and so I did.

When I went to the orphanage for the first time, I noticed something remarkable, the likes of which I had never seen before. These kids aged 10-14 were so eager to learn, and had such a desire to study, to get a better education, that I felt a need to help them. It was peculiar to note that most children of this age who belonged to well-off backgrounds did not want to study. They would find excuses to avoid going to class, while these underprivileged children were trying to look for excuses to attend them. Due to the high number of students, the manager asked us to divide the children into a couple of classes. What we saw was that some of the younger children were trying to sneak into class unnoticed, just so they could attend the class and learn something that could benefit them in the future.

This is where the contrast became apparent. In the wealthy schools, children try to sneak out of class while these poor, orphaned children try to sneak into class. To this day, I have not been able to figure out as to why there is such a difference between the desire to learn among the privileged and non-privileged children. Maybe it can be attributed to the fact that the unprivileged children realize that this is their only ticket out of poverty, or maybe they do not take it for granted, like their privileged counterparts. Whatever the reason is, this drive which I saw in them inspired me to study and work harder in my own field.

After the first day that I went, I knew I would return. And so every day after college, we would go to the orphanage and teach. These children had touched my heart, and I could not stop thinking about them. Every morning I would wake up with a fire in my heart, wanting to teach the children something new, to broaden their minds, and to make a difference in their lives.

Our primary goal was to teach them English, as

most of the modern books are written in it, and media, too, primarily uses English as its medium, especially after the advent of the Internet. We thought that it was imperative that they could understand and communicate in English. Aside from teaching English, we would make them go through different exercises in class every day to build their confidence. These exercises also helped in building their character and personalities. Every day, we would tell them inspiring stories which had a moral, so that they would become better human beings, as Martin Luther King said: "Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education."

As the months rolled by, our interaction with the children increased and the relationship of trust strengthened. We realized something amazing happening - not only were they learning English fast, but their habits and mannerisms were also changing. Soon they stopped lying and cheating, be it in studies or in sports. They were fighting less, and were more polite. Moreover, their way of thinking started to change and their outlook on life was more positive. I found myself at the brink of a renaissance. These changes deeply motivated and encouraged us, and taught us valuable life lessons.

Children learn faster, and what they learn becomes strongly ingrained in their personalities and changes their mannerisms as well. Children are innocent and open-minded; what they learn at a young age becomes part of their life and their thinking. Children are like a block of marble; they can be chiseled into what you want them to be. That is the beauty of teaching children. The so-called "grown-ups" have mostly closed minds, and are not willing to change, while it is the opposite with children. Thus, in my opinion, if you want to change people, you must bring about a change in their children. Furthermore, when you educate a child, you not only educate the child himself but you also educate his family; his children



and his children's children, and so forth. "If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in terms of ten years, plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people." – Confucius.

Another important thing that I realized was to give more respect to my teachers. We often don't pay much attention in class or we talk during a lecture, not realizing how much hard work the teacher has put into the lecture. I realized this when I would prepare a lesson for the next class (and it would take quite some work) and some student would not pay attention or would talk to another student during class, making me angry. But then again, I do the same thing with my teachers, not realizing how much effort they had put into their work. Teaching is a tough job, and demands a lot of effort and patience. We hear what our teachers say but few actually listen.

These two things that I experienced greatly helped me in my own studies at Shifa. Seeing how hard the children worked, I was inspired to work harder myself. To receive a good education is actually a gift; I valued my studies even more and realizing what a tough job teaching is, I began to pay more attention in class, and began to feel a great deal of respect for my teachers. Both these changes brought about a huge improvement in my grades, from failing nearly every module and passing only a few, to being in the top twenty in my class. Although the change was gradual, it helped me immensely, and I started to enjoy my medical studies much more. I feel maybe because I helped in educating the underprivileged, God helped in educating me, Alhamdulillah.

After two years of teaching at the orphanage, we learnt something very depressing. It all began when we started asking the children

about their families, and subsequently talked to the director of the orphanage about the kids at the request of a donor in order to improve the lives of their families back at home. What we learnt was shocking, depressing and eye-opening. Relating what we learnt that day, one of the volunteers rightly said, "We live in a little bubble, and are not aware of the reality around us." The reality is that most people in our community cannot even afford to feed their families two meals a day. Many can't afford one meal a day, and in some situations (e.g. Ramadan), they have nothing to eat at home. We also learnt that not all the children were orphans. Some had only a single parent, and those that had both, were either not working (due to a number of genuine reasons), or were disabled. Whatever

the case, they were fighting for their children's survival and their children's right to receive an education.

Thus, their guardians sent them to this shelter in order to get good nutrition, and more importantly, to get some semblance of an education. There is a lot more that can be said about the lives of those children,

but because I wish to try and keep this article concise, I will not be able to mention them here. It is said that when you are trying to solve the problems of others, you forget your own problems. This is true as one comes to realize that the problems which we may face are insignificant as compared to the problems others are facing, and the battles that they are fighting are tougher than the ones we may be fighting.

What I felt was a sense of shame. When in my own community, there live the poorest people, why is it that I go and waste the money that God has given me to spend in His way on useless things? It is said if you live in a rich country and are poor, you should be ashamed of





yourself. And if you live in a poor country and are rich, you should also be ashamed of yourself. Hazrat Ali (R.A) is reported to have said: “Zakat is not incumbent on me. How can a generous Muslim hoard money and pay zaka?”

There are two main kinds of wealth. One form is material wealth and the other is the wealth of knowledge. We have not only been told to distribute our material wealth, but also to distribute the wealth of knowledge. Anyone can give a large sum of money, but giving and distributing your knowledge is more worthy. The Holy Prophet (PBUH) said: “There are only two people to be envied; one is he whom Allah gives wealth, and he spends it in the right way until it is finished; and the other is he whom Allah gives wisdom, and he judges by it and teaches it.”

Another very important thing that I gained by teaching at the orphanage was an increased love for the Creator. When I saw the conditions that the children lived in, and how tough their lives were, I did feel sad for them, but at the same time, I also felt very lucky. What I felt was a deep gratitude to the Creator. Man by nature loves that which is kind to him. Whenever anyone is kind to you, you feel a sense of love towards them. When you go to places like these and see the conditions that they live in, you feel that God has been very kind to you. And that increases your love for Him. And this did indeed happen with me. Every night before I fell asleep, I would thank God for all that he had given me.

Here I would like to say that there have been a lot of learning experiences for me my whole life. In the past, I was a professional sportsman, and travelled

to more than a dozen countries. My travels also took me to many cities across Pakistan. I interacted with people from different cultures and different backgrounds, and learnt a great deal. I feel that what I have learnt these past two years of teaching at the orphanage outweighs what I learnt from any other experience. I came with the intention to help the children and teach them, but the reality is that it was them who unknowingly taught me. This experience has been both rewarding and insightful, and I would advise all to engage in such an activity. It will change you and make you a better person, and I assure you that your life will be happier, and you will get more out of it.

If you think that the pressure of medical school is too tough and does not permit you to teach the poor, I will give you the example of a student in Shifa College of Medicine. This student would teach at the orphanage and study 3-4 hours every day. In addition, he was playing professional tennis at the same time. During that time, he ranked in the top 10 in his class (in the neurosciences module), won two tennis tournaments and also actively taught at the orphanage every day. If this boy could do all 3 things, and that too, do them well, we have no right to say that we, being medical students have no time for such activities. In my opinion, good time management is the key.

Lastly, change comes from within. God says in the Quran: “Verily, God does not change the

state of a people until they change themselves.” If we are to change Pakistan into what it was initially destined to be, we must first change ourselves. Change the way we think, change the way we act and change the way we live our lives.

**...INDEED ALLAH SWT WILL NOT CHANGE
THE CONDITION OF A PEOPLE UNTIL
THEY CHANGE WHAT IS IN THEMSELVES.**

SURA AR RAD 13: 11
tartliert.tumblr.com



In short, we must be the change we want to see. Individually, if every Pakistani is good, then automatically Pakistan will be good... If individually we are honest, then as a whole, Pakistanis will be honest too... And also, our leaders won't be corrupt as the government is chosen from amongst the people.

According to the 1998 census; nearly 50% of Pakistan's population was below the age of 18 years, and some people say that today (2013), more than 60% of Pakistanis are below the age of 18 years. This is our strength. The future of Pakistan is in the hands of the youth. If they

can be educated well and be taught good morals which Islam teaches, Pakistan will no doubt have a very bright future. I believe that we can be the generation that ends ignorance (jihalat) in Pakistan. Nelson Mandela said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Thus, if the people of Pakistan, starting with the children, are educated, it will bring about a change in the people, and will liberate them from the shackles of ignorance, and change Pakistan forever insha'Allah...

Test Your Knowledge

1. In the New Testament by what name was the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) mentioned?
2. During the first three years after the first revelation, where would the Muslims gather secretly?
3. In which Surah were the Muslims given permission to emigrate to Abyssinia?
4. What does the word "Quran" mean?
5. Who suckled the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.)?
6. What did Muhammad's (p.b.u.h.) mother name him and why did she choose this name?
7. After the Prophet's (p.b.u.h.) mother passed away on her way back from Madina, who brought him (p.b.u.h.) back to Makkah?
8. What does "Jahiliyyah" mean?
9. "Shura" means, to make a decision by _____.
10. Name the Sura that refers to Orphans and Neighbors?

Answers on Page 25



muslim college life: Dating, Drinking and Deen!

By
Huma
Ahmad

Freedom. Young people live for the day when they can move out of the house and go to college and finally be free. Freedom from their parents, from restrictions on their lifestyle, from everyone telling them what to do. This is why in college you find a whole generation that does what they want. Life's short they say, let's enjoy ourselves while we can.

So it goes for Muslims. In college you find the most amazing things, Muslims who don't pray, Muslims who date, Muslims who attend Islamic meetings but go out to parties and drink. Why is this happening?

For one, when students go off to university they finally realize that what they believed in was blind. Religion becomes like a fairy-tale, when they got old enough, they knew better than to believe in it. Most have little knowledge about Islam and have maybe memorized the right rituals to get by. Why believe something on faith, they ask. After all we cannot see heaven or hell. How do we know Islam is right anyway?

Islamic culture to them means marrying someone they never knew. It means arranged marriages and never hanging out or having fun. For girls Islamic culture has even less to offer. It would mean double standards or having to serve a husband the rest of her life.

The western alternative to this looks a lot more attractive. In western culture "love and romance" are supposedly everywhere. Everyone is out looking for love freely. Meeting someone, going out, seeking pleasure sounds a lot better.

But what about the downside? For love at first sight, you need to have the right image, the right hair, and the right clothes. Girls have to aspire to be like the latest supermodels, they have to hold back age. Who's going out with who, what are my friends thinking, what will happen if I don't get the right girl or guy, what is my girlfriend or boyfriend thinking, all be-

come important. Frustration, desperation, and unhappiness become the norm.

Imagine all the heartache youth would save if they followed the Islamic alternative. In true Islam, unlike culture, there is no game playing. If two people wish to be involved they are both straight with one another. Unlike what goes on today amongst some Muslims, they both meet each other and make a contract to marry. Women are treated with respect; there is no sexual bombardment like there is in western society. Sex in western culture is also often seen as a vice or a sin of the flesh. But even in religious Islam, sex is seen as natural. As long as it is in the right circumstances, when the two are committed to one another in marriage.

Drinking in college is also the norm unfortunately. If you don't drink or party you're seen as weird. Drinking is cool and a way for people to socialize, meet and have fun. The one who doesn't is less of a person and 'misses out'. Drinking, and all the harms that come with it, is cut off at the root in Islam. So many problems are avoided; accidents, pregnancy, violence and even rape for example.

In college and in the world, success in life is not seen in terms of religion. It is seen as what other people think, one's careers, how much money they make. If you are religious you must have failed at life. But why do we have this separation? And this blindness in religion?

The Quran tells us again and again not to have blind faith, not to follow the religion of our forefathers.

Yet, we as Muslims have stopped thinking. We may think about what our friends or other people will say, but we avoid thinking about the real issues. We spend so much time on the opposite sex, thinking about careers, money etc, but we forget to think about death and how much of this we will really be able to take with



us?

“Every soul shall have a taste of death and only on the Day of Judgement shall you be paid your full recompense...for the life of this world is but goods and chattels of deception” (Quran 3:185)

Shouldn't we take the time to contemplate what will happen to us after we hit the grave? After all, what is the point of life if we are not accountable for our actions? If there is no creator, what is the point of being honest or good?

If we really look at our life we see that everything is indefinite, getting a job, even living until tomorrow. In fact we could die anytime, this is a definite, the only dead certain thing in our life. Most of us believe we can make up for our actions later or we can be religious later. We are gambling. The chances of our dying today are little, but the stakes are high. Allah reminds us of the importance of this, “O you, who believe, obey Allah as he should be obeyed, and die not except in a state of Islam” (Quran 3:102)

Each of us needs to decide. Is Islam right or not? Why don't we take the time, just once, once in our lives to find out if Islam is right? Is the Quran from God or not? We can't see God, but is there a maker to all this? We need to study nature, and the world. We only live once, if Islam is wrong then we should leave it, but if it's right we shouldn't go halfway. We shouldn't go to a club thinking we are only going to 'hang out and are not doing anything wrong' then feel guilty about it later. We shouldn't go on a date or drink, and then feel guilty about it, worrying about hellfire. If Islam is right, we should follow it.

On the Day of Judgement it will be us alone who will be asked about our actions. If Islam is right and we are not following this deen completely, we

are injuring our own soul, both in this life and the next.

“Verily We have revealed the Book to thee in truth, for (instructing) mankind. He, then that receives guidance benefits his own soul: but he that strays injure his own soul...” Quran 39:41

This is the true definition of freedom. To learn about Islam and the world openly. To contemplate about life and death. And after learning the truth, obeying the word of God. “Those on whom knowledge has been bestowed may learn that the (Quran) is the truth from your Lord, and that they believe therein, and their hearts may be made humbly (open) to it...” Quran 22:54

Once students have this rock-solid intellectual belief in Islam, the corruptness and falseness of the people around them is clear. The beauty and wisdom of the Islamic way, the best alternative is clear. What others do is of less importance. If others think they were weird to pray or weird to be honest, they would still pray and still be honest because they know their deen. Our Qurans are left on the top shelves, gathering dust. Sometimes the most it is read is when someone

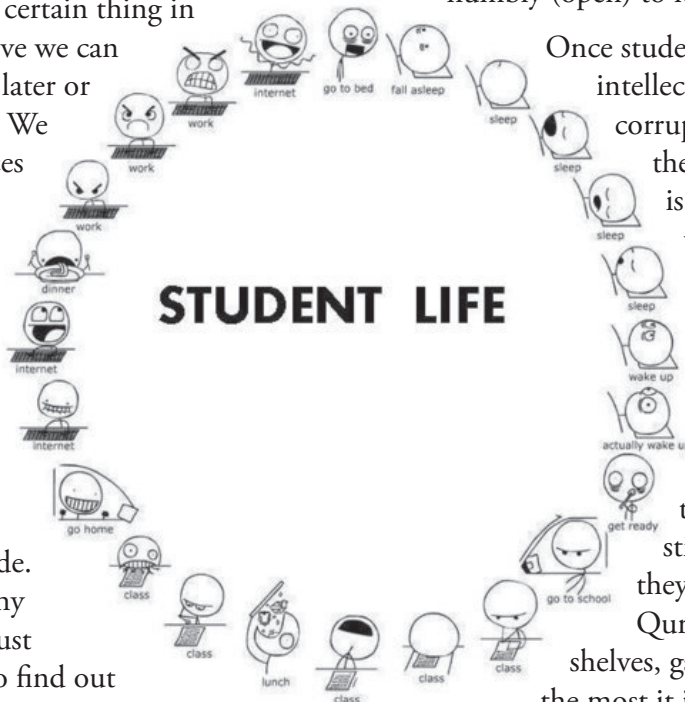
dies. How is this to help, when the guidance comes too late. The Quran is for the living. The path to understanding and following Islam comes from learning first.

How many of us are Muslim, yet have never read the Quran in our native language?

How many of us are Muslim, but have yet to open a book on hadith or sunnah?

How many of us defend Islam to non-Muslims, but do not follow it ourselves?

May Allah forgive and lead us and all those lost to the straight path, inshaAllah. Ameen





MIRZA YAWAR BAIG

Source: Akhlaaq of the Ummati

So what is Gheebah (backbiting)?

Abu Huraira (RA) reported that Rasoolullah (SAW) said: Do you know what is backbiting? They (the Companions) said: Allah and His Messenger know best. Thereupon he (SAW) said: Backbiting implies your talking about your brother in a manner which he does not like. It was said to him: What is your opinion about this that if I actually find (that failing) in my brother which I made a mention of? He said: If (that failing) is actually found (in him), you in fact backbited him, and if that is not in him it is slander. [Muslim :: Book 32 : Hadith 6265]

In another Hadith a man asked Rasoolullah (SAW), "What is backbiting?" Rasoolullah (SAW) replied, "It is to mention about a man what he does not want to hear." He said, "Ya Rasoolullah (SAW)! Even if it is true?" Rasoolullah (SAW) said, "If you utter something false, then it is slander." [Malik :: Book 56 : Hadith 56.4.10]

How bad does it have to be to qualify to become Gheeba?

In one incident from the Seerah, Sayyidatina Ayesha Siddiqah (RA) mentioned in passing about Sayyidatina Sawdah (RA) that she was rather heavy. Rasoolullah (SAW) said to her, 'Ayesha, if those words of yours are put into the oceans they would make all the water in the oceans bitter.'

Truly it is a very high standard that is set for us.

Why is Gheeba so bad and prohibited so severely?

For any community to be formed and grow together and form bonds of belonging it is essential that people respect one another. Love is the result of respect. Gheeba destroys respect. And so it destroys love for one another. Without love for one another divisions are created and the Ummah is destroyed.

Truly we don't need to look too far for examples in our society today. The one who does Gheeba gives away his good deeds to his victim. Now how intelligent is it to give away good deeds to the one you hate? That is why Imam Bukhari is said, 'If I have to do Gheeba, I will do the Gheeba of my mother because then at least my good deeds will go to the one I love.'

Imam Shafa'ee was informed that someone was backbiting him. So he went to him with some fruits. The man was surprised and asked him the reason for the gift. Imam Shafa'ee said, 'Since I believe you are giving me your good deeds, I thought I should at least thank you and so this is a gift for you.'

That is why I say, 'Thank the slanderer for he gives unasked.' It is strange to reflect that we don't even imagine giving away our good deeds to our own brothers and friends who we love. Yet we gladly give them away to those we hate. What a shame? And how destructive it is for the well-being of brotherhood? That is the reason why Gheeba has been prohibited so strongly.

What is not Gheeba?

1. To give information about a criminal is not Gheeba
 2. To give information about someone that you are asked about, who someone else wants to marry or do business with, is not Gheeba
 3. To speak and warn people about someone who is corrupting society or Islam is not Gheeba
- All of these must be done in the interest of the people and for their safety and wellbeing.

These days we are under attack from all sides. Whether it is mischief mongers who insult our Prophet (SAW) or terrorists who attack and kill our own people, there is always someone who has “beef with us”. However, in the words of Sun Tzu (in his book “the Art of War”) “keep your friends close and your enemies closer”, our greatest enemy is actually quite closer than we assume. It is the one and only: Shaitaan (*shudder*). He is our most ancient and indeed most bitter of foes, and we are supposed to treat him like that because it is mentioned, “Surely Shaitaan is an enemy to you, so take him as an enemy....” (Quran 35:6). So let’s gear up for the fight, and for any fight we should be well aware of our opponents’ weapons and tactics.

THE REAL ENEMY

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Background and a few myths

We all know the story of how Iblees refused to prostrate before Adam (AS) when the Almighty commanded him. We know he was arrogant and disobedient towards Allah, which is why he was kicked out of Jannah and became accursed. Then he swore to lead mankind astray, and was given respite until Judgment Day (Quran 7:11-18). It is a common misconception that Iblees is a “fallen angel”. Actually he is a Jinn who was granted such a high rank due to his devotion to Allah (at that time anyway). He himself says, “You created me from fire...” And we know that Jinn are made of fire whereas angels are made of light. Secondly, there isn’t just one Shaitaan who is leading the world astray; there are other Shayateen who are minions of Iblees, doing his dirty work. Thirdly, Shaitaan cannot directly force us to commit sins (Quran 16:99-100). All he can do is to give the children of Adam (AS) imaginations, illusions and delusions, make the ugly appear beautiful, the wrong, right; and the bad, good.

Mode of action (Misguidance 101)

Even in his limited capacity, we have to admit Shaitaan has been pretty successful in misguiding mankind throughout the ages (although this “success” is going to lead to failure in the Hereafter). Therefore, before we discuss his tools, we should realize that he is not to be underestimated. No one is safe from Shaitaan. Do not assume that since we are on the straight path, we are safe from his mischief, because he said so himself that he will be waiting for us on the straight path, just to misguide us (Quran 7:16). There is a famous story of Barseesa, a very devout worshipper from Bani Israel, who fell prey to the whisperings of Shaitaan and eventually committed Shirk before he died, thus multiplying all his deeds by zero and earning him the Hellfire (I’m sure it was one of the best days for Iblees).

Let us analyze Shaitaan’s strategies. Shaitaan follows a “step-by-step” approach. So if he cannot get you to commit Shirk immediately, he will start with minor sins, work his way up to major sins and finally get you to commit Shirk (as ex-

emphified by the story of Barseesa). It is important for us to understand, that unless otherwise kept in check, one sin will lead to another sin and so on.

We should understand that Shaitaan is an expert in espionage and covert operations; he won't come to us and say, "Hey! It's me, your bitterest sworn enemy. Let's go sin tonight," rather he would appear as a "sincere" adviser and "close" friend (Quran 7:21) and try to talk us into doing wrong. He'd give us "advice" that will seem to make sense at that time, but later we'd find out it was intended to doom us (as Adam (AS) rightly realized, but it was too late).

Historically, Shaitaan has inspired innovations and deviations in Allah's religions. For example, the Makkans claimed to follow the religion of Ibrahim (AS) but it had been corrupted so much, that some people used to make Tawaf around the Kaabah naked, during the Prophet's (SAW) youth, and they did not regard it as erroneous in the least. The best thing about innovations (from Iblees' perspective anyway) is that people do not realize it is wrong, they actually think they are doing good, and they do not feel the need to repent. Another variant of this is that Shaitaan might encourage people to move to one extreme in religion and lose all sense of moderation (e.g the Khawarij, extremists).

Playing with our psyche and emotions is one of the oldest tricks of the devil. If one is well off, he would try to put arrogance and prejudice in his or her heart ("I am so much prettier than that guy", "he's such a loser", "I am so much pious than my friends"). If one is facing difficult times, he would cause him or her to lose hope in Allah ("God has forsaken me"), he would cause one to lose his or her temper (and we all know what sort of stupid things people say and do in anger). If we see someone else succeeding in life, he immediately creates jealousy and enmity in our hearts ("I deserve that promotion, not that guy"). If we are working together with each other then he will create di-

visions among us ("that guy is from a 'deviant' sect"). When we have abundance, he would encourage us to be spendthrifts ("You've earned this, spend it all on yourself. If Allah wants to, He will feed the poor Himself").

Shaitaan is actually quite intelligent, much smarter than what we give him credit for, and thus one of his tricks is the misuse of intellect. He will present "rational" excuses of why we should disobey Allah ("If Allah wanted to guide you, He would have guided you already"). He would try to justify our sins for us ("I'm so overworked and busy; I can afford to miss my prayers", "I can't help myself, this is the way I was brought up, Allah will understand"). He would make us think that we are too smart for this "primitive" religion and that our intellect is beyond the laws of the Deen ("Why should I follow this religion when I have a PhD in political science?"). He'll get us to disrespect our parents and elders ("These old people are so backward; I'm much more knowledgeable than them").

If rationalizing does not work, the next best thing is to distort our beliefs and mess up our priorities, and Shaitaan is an expert at that too. He can make our bad deeds look like minor issues ("This isn't so bad; other people are doing much worse than me", "I know I'm not praying but at least I don't drink alcohol"). He makes our good deeds appear like a huge thing to us; so that we do not feel the need to improve or do any better ("I have prayed Fajr, I am so much better off than my friends who don't pray. Now since I have been such a good boy, I don't need to pray for another two days"). He can mess up our intentions; so instead of being pure, they will be polluted by pride and arrogance ("I'm giving charity; people must think I'm so pious"). Or he can make us overly conscious ("People might think I'm showing off; so I'd better stop praying in the Masjid and giving charity"). He will make the right path look extremely rigid and tough, at the same

time making the wrong path look very appealing (“It’s so hard being a devout Muslim, so I might as well have fun and party like there’s no tomorrow”). If one has sinned, he will make him or her think that there is no hope now (“I’m such a bad person, Allah won’t forgive me, so might as well continue sinning”). Then there is the opposite of that; too much false hope (“I’m a Muslim, I’m destined for Paradise no matter what. Just a little time in hell, then I’ll be partying away in Heaven”). Furthermore, curiosity killed the cat, and Shaitaan is going to use it to lead us to our doom as well (“Let me try it just this once; I just want to know what it feels like”, I wonder how many addicts started out with this statement.)

If all these tricks fail, then there is the ever-effective trap of procrastination and laziness (the one in which most of us find ourselves now and then). Shaitaan will cause us to delay in acts of obedience (the classic “I’m too sleepy; I’ll pray Fajar later”). He would make us lose focus and rush in our acts of worship (“Have to hurry my prayer; got to get back to the cricket match before the commercial ends”). He would make it appear to us that we do not have time for Allah (“You won’t graduate from college by reading the Quran”). He will cause us to lose sight of the ultimate goal and make the Hereafter appear far, far away (“I’m too young; I’ll repent and become sincere when I grow old”). If Shaitaan cannot get a person to commit a sin, then he will try to limit that person’s good deeds and potential for good. He may immerse us in something permissible (e.g. reading a story book) when we could have been doing something so much greater than that (e.g. giving out charity and helping out the needy). If the believer turns out to be real tough, then Shaitaan will get him through other people (e.g. peer pressure or get other people to talk bad about him/ her).

Our Defenses

So far, we have looked at some of the tricks used by Shaitaan (needless to say there are loads of others, but I think you get the general picture), now it is up to us to fortify our stronghold against this fiend. Knowing our enemy is the first part of the battle, and knowing even this much about Shaitaan gives us a chance to detect his presence and prevents us from being caught off guard. However, this would not be enough without the help of our most powerful Ally (i.e. Allah the Almighty). It is mentioned, “And if an evil whisper comes to you from Shaitaan, then seek refuge with Allah...” (Quran 7:200). I would like to mention here

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا

(35:6)

that simply saying, “Audhu Billahi Min AshShaytaan ir Rajeem” might not be

enough unless it is backed by sincere belief and a strong connection with Allah. We also learn from the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW) to recite Surah Al Falaq and Surah An Nas in order to seek refuge with Allah from the accursed. Related to this is the advice that we should remember Allah often; an apple a day keeps the doctor away, and a page of Quran a day keeps Shaitaan at bay. Remember, all good deeds increase Iman and limit Shaitaan, so never pass up an opportunity to do good. Try to remember the Hereafter and the accountability to Allah, which is an effective motivator for curbing evil.

Our environment influences us greatly. If we spend time in righteous company as opposed to foul company, we are less likely to fall prey to the whispers of Shaitaan. We should also reconsider our “media intake”; do we spend most of our time watching or listening to violent, vulgar or obscene things? If that is the case, then it should not come as a surprise that we are unable to resist the traps of Shaitaan. Remember idle minds are the devil’s workshop; so we should try our best to stay busy and productive. Always ask yourself, “What is the best use

of my time right now?” With regards to controlling our “carnal” desires, the Prophet (SAW) advised us to observe voluntary fasts, and we are told in the Quran to lower our gaze (24:30).

It is important for us to be well aware of our emotions (as mentioned by Daniel Goleman in his book “Emotional Intelligence”). This way we would be able to judge when our emotions are getting out of our control and falling into Shaitaan’s hands, and then we would be better able to resist our impulses of anger and jealousy. Another way to curtail jealousy and enmity is to always think good of people (the benefit of doubt in cases of conflict), that would Insha’Allah minimize quarrels. Another precaution in this regard is to abstain from backbiting

and gossiping as well as from spreading rumors (as mentioned in Surah Huja’rat) as this too creates divisions among friends. One cannot despise someone they pray for, so we should pray for the well being of all the people around us.

Finally, if we do fall prey to Shaitaan’s tricks (for we are only humans after all), then we should immediately turn to Allah and seek forgiveness. At the same time we should pray for guidance and strength against Shaitaan (after all, Du’a is one of the greatest weapons a Muslim has). I guess we are more or less ready to take on Shaitaan, so the next time he comes whispering to us, we will Insha’Allah send him running off with the help of the Almighty.

The Wise Sayings of Prophet Enoch

ALLAH PRAISES ENOCH IN THE QURAN

ENOCH HAS BEEN DESCRIBED AS BEING A PROPHET AND TRUTHFUL:

“Mention in the Book (Quran) Idris (Enoch). Verily! He was a man of truth (and) a prophet. We raised him to a high station”.

(Ch 19:56-57 Quran).

He was the first of the Children of Adam to be given prophethood after Adam and Seth (peace be upon them). It is reported that he was the first to invent the basic form of writing. Some of his wise sayings are:

“Happy is he who looks at his own deeds and appoints them as pleaders to his Lord.”

“None can show better gratitude for Allah’s favors than he who shares them with others.”

“Do not envy people for what they have as they will only enjoy it for a short while.”

“He who indulges in excess will not benefit from it.”

“The real joy of life is to have wisdom.”

SOURCE: STORIES OF THE PROPHETS

WRITTEN BY AL-IMAM IBN KATHIR

TRANSLATED BY MUHAMMAD MUSTAPHA GEME’AH, AL-AZHAR

There's nothing more expensive than a single drop of a female tear! From the corner of the eye, you can trace the luxurious journey of the drop. First it mixes with Chanel eyeliner and Dior mascara. Trickling further down, it takes up the heavenly pink hue of D&G blush-on. It may even be exposed to a lush shade of Burberry lipstick. This means that a single drop of tear is worth Rs. 15000!

Don't get me wrong, I do not mean to criticize all those people out there who use designer stuff, since I'm one big fan of designer accessories and cosmetics as well. The purpose of this article is to ponder upon the fact that why do we spend so much money on designer stuff? What is so special about them? What is the purpose of it all?

So I researched a bit on this, and I gathered rather interesting facts:

- The quality of designer stuff is much better compared to non-designer stuff.
- Designer apparel lasts longer.
- It makes you look trendy and stylish.
- It gives you confidence.
- It makes you look rich.

These are the major reasons behind the purchase of most designer items. So, I agree with the quality and lasting longer part but to look

rich, stylish and trendy? Well, that definitely makes you think.

On numerous occasions, we witness people spending time discussing the latest fashion trends. Wedding ceremonies are the perfect opportunities to wear nice clothes and tell

stories about how you came to buy the 'perfect' dress, the 'perfect' shoes and the 'perfect' bag about which people will talk for days.

"Who's wearing the most gorgeous Gucci shoes?"

"Oh my god, is that a Prada original handbag?"

"These Christian Loubotin shoes are SO last season. You simply cannot go out in these!"

And so on....

The society has evolved into a consumerist one and our economy has grown to a stage where everyone is caught up in a cycle of working to earn and then spending it off on our so-called 'necessities' of life. All the advertisements we have out there are making it even harder for us to resist the latest trends. We wait patiently in lines to get our hands on the latest stuff that came out for the season. We spend all our hard earned money on a shirt, a bag or a perfume which will ultimately face its demise in a short time period.

I could go on and on about the pros and cons of the designer label market and the effect it has on us. How it is corrupting our lives is

The Designer Fever

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another important issue but talking about these topics would be hypocritical on my part. We are human and we all like to indulge ourselves from time to time.

So questions arise..... Is this talk and hype about fashion, trends and designers, really worth it? Will it matter to us in the end? We love designers and their work but have we ever loved the One who designed it all from scratch? Who designed the perfect worlds, the perfect religion and the perfect book? Have we ever been so crazy for all the clothes, furniture and houses that He has made for us and which are just waiting for us, free of cost?

Allah (SWT) says:

'Truly, Allah will admit those who believe (in the Oneness of Allah) and do righteous good deeds, to Gardens underneath which rivers flow (in Paradise), wherein they will be adorned with bracelets of gold and pearls and their garments therein will be of silk.' - (Al-Haj 22: 23).

'(They will be) on thrones woven with gold and precious stones, Reclining thereon, face to face. They will be served by immortal boys, with goblets, (shining) beakers, and cups (filled) out of clear-flowing fountains : No after-ache will they receive therefrom, nor will they suffer intoxication' - (Al-Wāqī'ah 56: 15-19).

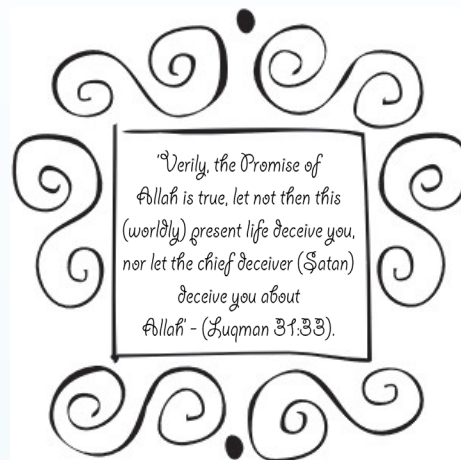
Awesome, isn't it? Alas, we are much too engrossed in our quest for worldly perfection, to realize our true purpose of life. Abdullah Ibn `Umar (R.A) said: "The life of this world is Paradise for a disbeliever and a prison for a believer. When a believer dies and departs from this world he feels himself like a prisoner who was released to go freely on the spacious earth." This doesn't mean that we give up every association with this Dunya (this world). We need to work in a systematic way and the first thing

we need to do is abandon sins, for the need to wash away our sins and uproot bad habits surpasses the need to let go of dunya. It's high time that we realize what actions and activities are worth our valuable time on Earth. We've been warned and cautioned.

'Know that the life of this world (dunya) is only play and amusement, pomp and mutual boasting among you, and rivalry in respect of wealth and children... the life of this world is only a deceiving enjoyment.' - (Al-Hadid 57:20).

We do not heed. We question Allah's promise but we never question Giorgio Armani about his promise of making our lives worth living

because he's 'more than just a designer - he's an institution, an icon and a multinational, billion-dollar brand.' We can create our own Paradise, designed by humans for humans, or we can strive for the Paradise designed by Allah (SWT) for humans. After all, designer stuff does last longer and has superior quality. The better the creator, the more satisfaction you get.



It has been related by Ibn Shaddad al-Fahri that the Prophet (May the blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "This world, in comparison with the world to come, is the same as if one of you were to put his finger in the ocean. Consider how much you would have when you pulled it out" (related by Sahih Muslim Kitab al-jannatu wa Na'imuha, 17/191). So dear readers, the choice is yours. You can either spend all your energy, time and money to get stuff that gets out of fashion and needs to be discarded, or you can invest in something much more significant and everlasting. You know how to do both. May Allah (SWT) guide us all to the right path. Ameen.

FASHION POLICE

While sitting in a group of six girls for over an hour I realized something funny. We did not discuss the crippled economy, the corrupt politicians or our ever-so-demanding studies. Instead the hot topic (read the only topic) we talked about was clothes! We discussed the latest fashion, the new clothing lines, our likes and dislikes, favorite tailors and clothing fantasies. After we were done with ourselves we discussed, scrutinized, criticized and evaluated every girl we knew and her choice in attire. Some were crowned ladies with 'good tastes' while others were not so 'lucky'. They were found guilty of wearing stuff that was outdated, dull or simply funny.

If you would ask me, clothes are meant to cover you, and if you are lucky enough, to make you look decent or even nice. In the world today though, clothes have become much more than that. There are dresses for every occasion- for birthdays and Dua-e-Khair to funerals and Majlis. Simply put, it's a jungle out there. Girls as young as 4 to women as old as 80, none are spared. If you ponder on the wild frenzy associated with clothes, you will realize that women not only dress to impress people but a large majority of them actually dress up to save themselves from other women! Reason: women have evolved into fashion vultures, feasting through their criticisms on girls who happen to wear something that is not fashionable.

I know many lose interest when religion is brought into an argument so I will refrain from that, but just as a reference I understand now why Allah commanded modesty. I think He knew women will do nothing but think about clothes all day long for lack of any other resourceful use of time. He also knew women would waste thousands of rupees, and then torture themselves and their poor husbands, fathers and the tailors for hours just to get one dress

made.

I am sure many of the gentlemen out there would be familiar with the ordeal that comes with a woman deciding to get a new dress, but for all those lucky guys who have been spared, let me shed some light on the whole process of getting a new dress made. Well, it starts on a fine morning when a woman sees another woman wearing a new extremely pretty dress. After complimenting the woman wearing the new dress with a heavy heart, she goes home and decides to make a new outfit for herself too.

Step one: she will have to choose amongst

thousands of brands out there in the market (if I start naming only the new lawn lines, the whole magazine would be filled with these names). She will travel from shop to shop. Out of breath, she will repeat this line to many salesmen, 'bhai zara woh wala print dekhana' (Brother, please show me that design). After a

good three hours she will finally find something that matches her criteria but the story doesn't end here folks.

Next step is stitching. I cannot decide who suffers more in this process: the tailor aka 'master sahib' or for the scores of women reporting to tailor shops every day. The so called 'master sahib' will torture the poor woman for a good one month. He will either get the fitting wrong or make his own innovations in the design. Worse still, he will simply lose the dress. You would expect that after such an arduous process, women would own the dress of their dreams but alas that is the case for only 20% of them.

It is a similar tale for western fashion. Not so long ago all one had to do was don a pair of blue jeans. The only wardrobe-sifting moment was when you were looking for a top to go with the jeans.



However, the trend has changed. Jeans come in so many vivid colors, designs and cuts, that even wearing jeans is a hassle.

There was a time when society invented clothes, now sadly clothes are inventing the society. Not following the latest fashion or clanking in the halls in stilettos does not make one inferior in any way. Moreover, many a times fashion is plain ridiculous. It is unbelievable the extent people go to in order to adopt it. To top it off, they are judicious in criticizing people who are bold enough to follow their hearts or strong enough to not get intimidated by the pressure being put on them by the fashion industry.

We get so carried away while criticizing that we forget we can be subjected to the same criticism too. Have we ever thought how would that make us feel? I don't mind nicely dressed girls. I don't even mind girls who are obsessed with clothes. I only stand against the criticism and peer pressure fashion-shunners have to bear. If this is a free world, why does everyone feel so obliged to wear what is 'in'. Standing against the fashion tide is

almost impossible. We have been forced to believe that we are living in a free world, but trust me there can be no bigger deception than that.

Ladies, the amount of money and time spent thinking about outfits is really not worth it. You will wear a gorgeous dress one day. People will envy you. They will congratulate you, make you feel good about yourself. But when you wear the dress a second time, it will be old news. That expensive new dress will be your old dress now. So you will get a new one made and the vicious cycle will continue.

Instead of that, why don't you shop for a decent amount of clothes and pay attention to more important things: spend that extra bit of money and time on something more productive. There is more to this world than looking nice and letting others down. Don't be fooled; you are not mocking people, people are mocking you.

I apologize for getting a bit carried away (after all I have been a victim of the "fashion police" myself) but I guess the point I want to get across is this: don't dress to impress, just dress for yourself.



Answers to Quiz (from page 14)

1. By the name of Paraclete.
2. They would gather secretly in the house of a Muslim called Arqam to learn about Islam and the revelations sent down to the Prophet (p.b.u.h.).
3. Surah Az Zumar
4. There are two famous opinions on the meaning of the word Quran. 1) It is driven from al-Qar' meaning 'to collect'. 2) It is driven from 'Qara' (to recite). Thus, it is called 'the Quran' for it is a Book to be recited (73:4), or because the revelation began by 'Read' (96:1). The second opinion (driven from the root 'to recite') seems more accurate.
5. First Thuyeba, the freed slave girl of his uncle Abdul Uzza known as Abu Lahab, then Haleema Bint Abu Dhuaib, best known as Haleema Al Sadiyah.
6. She named him Ahmad because she saw an angel in a dream calling the new-born baby Ahmad.
7. His father's slave girl, Umm Aiman
8. Ignorance
9. Mutual consultation
10. Maun

Daily Deeds

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The need for change and, closely related, the desire for change are universal phenomena which take place not only in individuals but also in communities, cities and nations with the hopes of establishing a “better” way of life where perceived injustices are dismantled and rights are promised. Each time a new way of life is established, people promote it, proclaim to the entire world all of its benefits and paucity of flaws. The people religiously struggle to preserve the system as they truly believe in it. And the new system might truly be beneficial for the people. However, over the years and centuries, established systems are exposed to corrosive and destructive forces; small deviations in the philosophy of the system; misinterpretation, intended or not; relaxed or lacking vigilance in guarding the rights guaranteed by the system. These errors, small or large, if left unchecked ultimately decompose the foundations of the principles of the established way of life. Injustice becomes rampant and soon the call by the oppressed for a new way of life is propagated and ends up overthrowing the old and ushering in the new. However true a system might be, however just, fair, ethical or perfect it might be, if extreme vigilance and caution are not entertained to protect the system, it will eventually fail. In a perfect system, the need for change, the desire to overthrow it, arises when the system itself has been changed, meaning its principles have not been properly applied. The need to have a constant security, a method to keep everything in check to make sure no boundary is overstepped or duty unfulfilled, is obvious.

Focusing on the individual, and in our case, the individual Muslim, one has to inculcate certain principles, virtues, and responsibilities in oneself so that together, these individuals as a community can preserve their way of life. For some, all it takes for them is to hear about a duty or responsibility and they immediately comply and submit to it. They understand the truth in it

and are not hesitant to act upon it. For others, it takes time to understand the truth; they struggle with it or remain unsure about it but gradually come to accept and follow it. And there are some who simply deny the truth so that they are not obliged to fulfill any duties or responsibilities. Finally, there are those who come to accept the truth but have a difficult time upholding its principles; they want to believe but at times falter out of weakness or ignorance. I would personally identify most with this category.

There are many methods to help in this struggle, but I would like to propose one that I found while reading an autobiography by an early American politician, Benjamin Franklin. His proposed method of self-improvement might seem similar to plans proposed by other people but I am citing him as a reference only because I came across it in his writings. The first component involves writing out a daily schedule in which each hour of the day is accounted for (Figure 1). This might seem simple or minor

FIGURE 1: DAILY SCHEDULE

5	Rise, Prayer Fajr
6	Exercise, breakfast
7	Religious study/work
8	Work/School
9	
10	
11	
12 pm	
1	Lunch, Prayer Zohr
2	Work/School
3	Prayer Asr
4	Prayer Maghrib
5	Homework
6	
7	Prayer Isha
8	Dinner
9	Homework/leisure
10	
11	Sleep
12	
1	
2	
3	
4	

but as I began scheduling my day by the hour, I came to realize the many hours that tend to go unaccounted for, that are squandered away doing nothing. These many 'lost' hours can be used to do the things that "we never have time for," like reading and memorizing Quran, doing charity work, spending time with family, etc. Furthermore, it is important to write in daily chores, tasks, and also leisure, recreational, and exercise times so that everything has a place and is balanced. A crucial modification to Franklin's schedule is the addition of Salat times. The actual foundation for a daily routine should be set around the obligatory prayers. As the prayer times shift, so should a person's schedule because these times of prayer are a reminder of the true purpose behind all of the activities and chores that are planned for a day; everything that one does should be an act of worship and submission.

The second component proposed by Franklin involves a set of thirteen virtues and a brief description of each (Figure 2). He had offered his own descriptions based on his own ideas and the ideas of his time. However, I have not included them and would encourage the reader (if they choose to use this program) to search and find their own descriptions from Quran and Hadith. First, this will increase one's general Islamic knowledge, and second, it will

promote a sense of ownership with this method. So, each week, one should focus on a single virtue primarily and try to ensure its upholding in all situations. At the end of each day of the week, one is then supposed to take account of his or her day and evaluate whether or not he or she embodied that virtue. Most importantly, this daily accounting process needs to be documented (see example). It is very important to make note of the daily progress. For instance, if someone exercises with weights, in order to make sure he or she is increasing in strength, they write down the previous week's lifted weight and then increase it in the present week. If someone has a really good memory then maybe they can forego the actual documentation. But, the visual recording of progress for most people has a great impact on seeing where one actually stands. So each week one virtue is highlighted while the others are also considered but in the background. It is also important to focus on one at a time to prevent overburdening oneself or making it too difficult or even impossible. A modification to the list of virtues involves the addition of the obligatory prayers, Nawafil prayers, Dawah, and Istighfar. These are personal modifications and can be adjusted to one's own needs at the time.

A daily schedule and process for daily accountability can be useful if one is looking to establish the virtues, duties, and responsibilities required to uphold and safeguard a true or perfect way of life.

Tarbiyah							
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Temperance (in dining)	●						
Silence							
Order							
Resolution							
Frugality							
Industry							
Sincerity							
Justice			●		●		
Moderation							
Cleanliness							
Tranquility							
Chastity							
Humility							
Fajr	●						
Zohr							
Asr							
Maghrib							
Isha							
Nawafil							
Tahajjud							
Wudu							
Dawa							
Istighfar							

FIGURE 2

Example: This week is focused on justice. Monday and Tuesday were good, but Wednesday and Friday, I was not just, so they are marked. The rest of the virtues are marked also if there was an obvious situation in which that virtue was not upheld. For example on Monday I ate too much so it is marked. I also missed Fajr on Monday.

Will you Marry ME?

My ISLAMIC PARTNER
BLOG

Marriage. The old ball and chain? Or perhaps the day you've been waiting for all your life. Maybe it shows you that you're finally committed to the special someone you "love" for better or for worse, rich or poor (after many years trying to find that right partner, and "test driving" them!) Or to be more up to date – people marrying for money, or to get into high society. Or maybe it's something you are dreading that will happen to you. Whatever your reason for getting hitched, there is one thing that worries people more than the marriage itself... how long will it last? What if it ends? And what if you have children? How will you bring them up? Will they go through the same cycle of messing about, drugs, drinks and broken relationships that we went through? Doesn't it seem to get worse each year.

They think it's all over... it is now.

Marriages seem to be over before they've even begun. Broken families are common. Britain has the highest rate of teenage mothers in the world. It's the most common thing to see a teenage mother pushing her buggy and trying to get onto the bus. Half of people getting married now end in divorce. With a society that chases freedom, individualism and the constant search for the next high – we find that affairs, loss of interest, careers and just the feeling that "the grass is greener on the other side" has been responsible for many marriages breaking down. It's these damaging ideas that are the cause of all these problems. These ideas have also started affecting the Muslim families as well. So now it may be the girl pushing the pram is your Muslim sister. Thing is not to hate on her, but why is this happening? Why are Muslims beginning to think the same way about their relationships? Does Islam have any way of preventing this?

Family chaos.

The issue of families breaking down this way has serious consequences – think of all the children in-between a messy divorce or growing up with only one parent. Not only that, but the breakup of the family has wider and more damaging effects on the rest of society.

A recent Breakdown Britain report on this issue says “70% of young offenders come from lone-parent families and levels of anti-social behaviour and delinquency are higher in children from separated families. Children from broken homes were 75% more likely to fail in education and that leads to problems of drug addiction and failure and dependency”.

Islamic Marriage.

Can the Islamic marriage solve all these problems? Let's clear one thing first – Muslims aren't angels. And just because you stick to an Islamic marriage model doesn't mean you won't have any problems – but as a community and society - the model of an Islamic marriage does prevent many of the issues we see today. This is because at the core of the Islamic relationship, marriage and home is the belief that we are here to worship Al-mighty Allah and he is watching all that we do. Islam is the source of how we look at the world, our problems and our solutions. Allah (SWT), who created man, knows mankind (men, women and children) best and what problems we can have. It's because of this that Allah is the best source of solutions for our problems in life.

Home of happiness.

So how does Islam solve these problems then? Well there are many different problems and therefore many different solutions. Firstly it's in the way Islam views marriage and the whole issue of family life. People wishing to get married, enter it knowing the seriousness of the action they're about to take. Also in Islam divorce is not something to be taken lightly- it is a last resort. All of the Muslim's actions are done for the pleasure of Allah (SWT) and on this issue of divorce the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) said: “Of all the permitted things divorce is the most hated by God” and “Marry and do not divorce, undoubtedly the throne of the beneficent Lord

shakes due to divorce.” So in order to please Allah (SWT), a Muslim does the best he can to make his relationship work – so if this means he has to try harder, or be more patient or learn to be more forgiving or nicer - the Muslim will try his best to do so, in order to try to make the relationship stay together and seek the pleasure of Allah (SWT).

Also, many of the other factors that lead to a marriage breaking down like looking at other women/men or having affairs etc. are prevented as a Muslim husband or wife knows that Allah is watching everything they do. The fear of punishment of Allah prevents Muslims from doing things that are haram; like flirting and having relationships outside marriage. It's in this way that many causes for marriages breaking down today are prevented in the Islamic marriage.

The Muslim family is one that encourages each other to worship Allah and become responsible and care for each other. The Prophet (SAW) said, “Every one of you is a guardian, and every one of you will be questioned about those in his care. The man is a guardian with regard to his family, and

will be questioned about those in his care. The woman is a guardian with respect to her husband's house, and will be questioned about that in her care. So, every one of you is a guardian, and every one of you will be questioned about those in his care.” (Bukhari, Muslim).

And what about love and respect in the Muslim family? Well, unfortunately sometimes because of our culture we only see the respect and love flow one way – from us to our elders. But Islam teaches us it's equal respect and love that we are meant to have in our families. A man once came to the Prophet Mohammed (SAW) and said “I have ten children and I have never kissed any of them.” The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) glanced at him and said,



“The one who is not merciful will not be shown mercy.” (Bukhari).

Also look at the way Islam teaches the parent and children to act; Aisha, the wife of the Prophet (SAW) said, “I didn’t see anyone who more resembled the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and grant him peace, in manner of speaking than Fatima. When she came to him, he stood up for her, made her welcome, kissed her and had her sit in his place. When the Prophet came to her, she stood up for him, took his hand, made him welcome, kissed him, and made him sit in her place. She came to him during his final illness and he greeted her and kissed her.” Can we imagine a house where both the young and old try to be their best in terms of being warm, caring, smiling, welcoming and loving in order to please Allah?

So Islam makes the family unit something that you should try to make solid as a rock. Not something that you breakup without realising how much Allah (SWT) disapproves of the one who does so. The Muslim family is one that makes each and everyone someone who is responsible and enjoys taking care of others as a form of worship. But more importantly, the Muslim family is one of love and compassion, of good morals and respect. It is by ensuring that the Muslim family is like this that we can make the building blocks of society solid and strong whilst at the same time caring and responsible.

(N.B. This is an abridged version of the original article)

Hook Up with Allah, Allah will Hook You Up

MARYAM AMIREBRAHIMI
SOURCE: SUHAIBWEBB.COM



Before I got married, I was given unsolicited advice on how to change in order to make myself “more appealing” to men. Sisters would voluntarily tell me I should change my dress style, personality and passion for activism in order not to scare them away.

I was frustrated. Since when was our purpose in life marriage? Where in the Qur’an does Allah The Provider—The One Who has written our provision in every aspect of our lives—ask us to change our personalities and tone down our activism. Nevertheless, with marriage being such a huge concern for our community, many face the temptation to change who they are and their core values for the sake of finding a spouse.

Here’s an idea: Instead of working to please a potential suitor, perhaps we should first seek to please Allah *subhanahu wa ta’ala* (exalted is He), the One Who sows the seed of love in our hearts and can bless us with our dream husband or dream wife or give us better than it if that’s what is best for us. Thus, for those of us seeking to get married, in addition to looking for marriage at every event, let’s look for marriage in our relationship with *Al Wabbab*, The Giver of All. Let’s be honest. We are talking about the *Al Mujeeb*, The Responder to Prayer. Those are amongst the Names of Allah! Allah **gives** and He **answers**!

If we are individuals who struggle to lower our gaze and protect our eyes, heart, tongue and body from falling into what is forbidden, don’t we know that Allah *`azza wa jall* will indeed massively reward us? Every time we glance up and see someone we wish we could be with and then turn away, in that moment we can fervently ask Allah (SWT) to bless us with a spouse who will be the sweetness of our eyes. Would not Allah *`azza wa jall* listen to and accept your supplication to Him? The Prophet (peace be upon him) has encouraged us with regards to our *dua* (supplication), “Ask and **you will be given**, ask you will be given,” (at-Tirmithi).

In those moments in the last third of the night, in those two *rakahs*



Surah An-Nur, Ayah 26

increasing, we are finally tasting the sweetness of

(units of prayer) which we make out of pure frustration of our situation, weeping, asking Allah (swt) to answer us—do we not think Allah *rabul`alameen* (Lord of the Worlds) will respond to us? How could Allah, The Responder, possibly not accept the supplication of His adamant worshipper who is painfully struggling to maintain his or her modesty and guard his or her chastity? *Allahu Akbar* (God is the Greatest), this is Allah! Without doubt Allah *subhanahu wa ta`ala* is going to answer us!

What is hooking up with a brother or sister on Facebook worth if we're not more adamant about hooking up with the One Who can hook us up? As Shaykh Muhammad Faqih once said, "Hook up with Allah, Allah will hook you up!"

Let's hook up with *salah* (prayer)! Hook up with the Qur'an! Hook up with community work for Allah's Sake! And have certainty that when we struggle to please Allah *subhanahu wa ta`ala*, Allah, *Ash-Shakoor*, is the Most Appreciative of our work and will undoubtedly reward us.

Will that reward be in the form of an amazing spouse and an amazing marriage? Allah knows best. Perhaps it may and perhaps it may not. The Prophet has told us, "Any Muslim who supplicates to Allah in a dua which contains no sin breaking of kinship, Allah will give him one of three things: either his dua will be immediately answered or, it will be saved for him in the hereafter, or it will turn away an equivalent amount of evil (from him)..." (Ahmad)

Easier said than done? Maybe. But what have we got to lose? If at the end of the day, we are only increasing in closeness to Allah *subhanahu wa ta`ala*, we are finding our Qur'anic recitation

our salah, we're making more fervent dua than ever before—then, God willing, we will have gained more than a spouse if one gets married, and we would have gained much more than facebook "cruising for a spouse" time while we're attempting to find our better half.

Those of us looking to get married must take the means necessary—meeting new people, getting involved with new organizations and projects, considering online options or singles' events... We must take the means necessary for the outcome. But let us not forget that the One Who will facilitate the outcome should be on our minds, in our hearts and worshipped through our actions in more passionate, fervent ways than the time and effort we justifiably spend searching for our better halves.

We are coming to Allah with *raja* (hope), with a powerful combination of seeking Allah's pleasure, striving to leave anything which may gain His displeasure and making a consistent effort to ask Him to open the best of ways for us. And with all of that, we're putting our trust in Him that He will give us whatever is best. Of course Allah is listening and He will undoubtedly answer us.

As was once stated, "A person has never held certainty in Allah only for Allah to disappoint him or her. Never will Allah disappoint those with *yaqeen* (certainty), *tawakkul* (reliance) and *husn al-dhann* (good opinion) of Him."

Hook up with Allah and Allah, the All Wise, will undoubtedly hook us up in the best of ways.

(N.B. This is an abridged version of the original article)

Source: Quran.com

I've sinned way too much!

Qur'an, 39:53: "Say, "O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning], do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the Forgiving, the Merciful."

Lord
OF THE
Universe

Contributed by

MUJTABA SHAHBAZ

SSS Vice President

Class of 2015

Shifa College of Medicine

THE
Answer
TO

THE
Creator
AND

OUR
Problems
FROM

I'm not at peace!

Qur'an, 5:16: "By which Allah guides those who pursue His pleasure to the ways of peace and brings them out from darknesses into the light, by His permission, and guides them to a straight path."

I don't have any true friends!

Qur'an, 2:257: "Allah is the ally of those who believe. He brings them out from darknesses into the light. And those who disbelieve - their allies are Taghut. They take them out of the light into darknesses. Those are the companions of the Fire; they will abide eternally therein."

I don't have anything to look forward to.

Qur'an, 2:25: "And give good tidings to those who believe and do righteous deeds that they will have gardens [in Paradise] beneath which rivers flow..."

My life is too hard!

Qur'an, 94:05: "For indeed, with hardship [will be] ease."

I'm not appealing to the other gender!

Qur'an, 33:35: "Indeed, the Muslim men and Muslim women, the believing men and believing women, the obedient men and obedient women, the truthful men and truthful women, the patient men and patient women, the humble men and humble women, the charitable men and charitable women, the fasting men and fasting women, the men who guard their private parts and the women who do so, and the men who remember Allah often and the women who do so – for them Allah has prepared forgiveness and a great reward."

Nobody loves me, I don't have tranquility in my heart!

Qur'an: "And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquillity in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

No one appreciates what I do for them!

Qur'an, 76:22: "[And it will be said], "Indeed, this is for you a reward, and your effort has been appreciated."

I'm not as fortunate as the others around me

Qur'an, 14:34: "And He gave you from all you asked of Him. And if you should count the favor of Allah, you could not enumerate them. Indeed, mankind is [generally] most unjust and ungrateful."

I've been too bad of a person, Allah won't ever forgive me!

Qur'an, 3:135: "And those who, when they commit an immorality or wrong themselves [by transgression], remember Allah and seek forgiveness for their sins – and who can forgive sins except Allah? – and [who] do not persist in what they have done while they know."

building A FAMILY

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Regaining the Glory

September 28, 2012, 3:00 PM- I hear the clanking of utensils nearby in the kitchen and the deep ticking of the wall clock announcing the hour of conscious effort while letting the timeless portals open wide. As I inhale, I can smell the fleeting aroma of spices. I become more and more distracted by ideas of what might be in the kitchen. This urge to explore another room in the house motivates me to put down my leaky ball-point, to rise, and to consider the other incredible experiences that await my four senses. Oh wait! I am striving hard to keep myself focused.

‘What to write about?’ I soliloquized. The endlessness of thoughts provided an exalting sight of boundless ideas and a picture of the present world was finally painted in front of my eyes by the labyrinth of emotions. While gliding over the oceans in search of an isle, I could feel a pile of questions crawling under my skin, swiftly enhancing my waking sense. There was a time when the magnificent bells of twilight chimed to announce the Muslim glory, it was the time when we were flames that enlightened the path beyond the gates. However, today, down has slipped, our armor to reach the muddy ground that once received our tears. The wind is making the mockery of men, the creature in the red cape has made our self-confidence leak from a thousand wounds in our souls. Once the twinkling stars like myriads of ice drops, we are now residing in the crystalline darkness. What are the reasons of the downfall of Muslims? How can we regain our past glory? How can we make our next generations reach the heights? These issues require our utmost attention.

I’m not a scholar or an Aalim, I’m just a novice, a beginner, a tyro. For me, ‘building up a strong family’ solved the puzzle, for it will eventually lead to strengthening of the Muslim Ummah.

Bruised with the bitter blows of time in these days of manmade wonders, my mind looked forward to be fed by the rain of enlightenment, in the playfield with research. I came across countless amazing writings and books that it got too hard to decide what to write about and what to skip. In this discussion particularly, supported by Quranic verses and Ahadith, I would like to throw light on the two major factors that determine the strength of a family:

- 1- Relationship between the spouses
- 2- Raising of the children

Before I start, it is worth mentioning, the religion Islam, the Quranic Verses and the sayings of Holy Pophet (SAW) are flawless. Flaws may be expected in this article of mine for I am only an ordinary human being, slave of Allah Almighty. Section 1; relationship between the spouses, is based on the writings of Sheikh Nasir Al-Omar and Section 2; raising of the children, is based on the writings of Sheikh Younus Kathrada, Al-Madinah Academy. Neither is it my original work, nor would I guarantee the authenticity of any part of the following discussion. Furthermore, translation of Quranic Verses and Ahadith are mentioned as they were found in the respective articles.

I Relationship between the spouses

RIGHTS OF HUSBAND OVER WIFE

1. Being a supervisor. It is the right of the husband and thus a key to stability of the family. A wife, by her very own nature wishes to lean towards a shoulder in the times of joy and despair thus a husband has to be firm and should fulfill the role of giving the family a feeling of security.
‘Men are supervisors over women because Allah has made some of them superior over others; and also because of what they spend from their wealth.’ (Surah an-Nisa, 34)
2. This is borne out of narration of Abu Huraira (RA) who says: “No woman should fast while her husband is present except with his leave. No woman should allow anyone in his house while he is present except with his leave.” (Bukhari and Muslim)
3. Not to assume voluntary fasting without his permission. Refer to the hadith mentioned earlier in ‘2’. This does not apply to compulsory fasting.
4. Serving the husband. A wife should serve the needs of her husband. However, it does not mean that the husband has an absolute authority over his wife. The well being and happiness of wife should be considered while asking her to do the chores.
The aunt of Hussain Ibn Muhsin (RA) came to Prophet (SAW) who asked her if she was married and if so, how she was with her husband. She said she made every effort to serve him and keep him happy as much as possible. The Prophet (SAW) said: “Be careful how you are with him. He can either be your Paradise or (means of) your Hell.” (Ahmed, Ibn Sa’d and Hakim)
5. Safeguard herself, his wealth and children. Honor, wealth and children are precious belongings of a believer and a trust in his wife’s hands. It’s her duty to safeguard them.
The Prophet (SAW) said: “The wife is a caretaker in the house of her husband and she will be questioned about it.” (Bukhari and Muslim)

RIGHTS OF WIFE OVER HUSBAND

1. Mahr. It can be rightfully demanded from the husband. “And give women their mahr as gifts.” (Surah an-Nisa, 4)
2. Expenses and residence. The matter is well elaborated in the Holy Quran. “And it is a duty for a father of the child to provide her (the mother) with food and clothing in kindness.” (Surah al-Baqarah, 233).
“Lodge them where you dwell, according to your means.” (Surah at-Talaq, 6)
3. Living with kindness. A wife would not be wrong if she demands this from her husband. Even in the event of divorce, men are instructed to be kind. “And deal with them in kindness.” (Surah an-Nisa, 19).
4. Education. This matter is sometimes, even more important than providing wife with food and clothing, especially when a wife does not have adequate Islamic knowledge and orientation.
5. Right to be kept in honor and dignity. A husband should be able to protect the honor and dignity of his wife, especially in front of others. It’s one of the most prominent rights of a wife. Furthermore, it is recommended for a husband to have certain

amount of possessiveness.

Among the Prophet's (SAW) companions, Hazrat Sa'd was known to be possessive about his wife. The Prophet (SAW) said: "Are you amazed at how much Sa'd is possessive? By Allah, I am much more possessive than he is and Allah is much more so than I." (Muslim)

6. Right to sleep and live in peace. A husband is bound to take care of the psychosocial and emotional needs of the wife. She is not merely a servant who cooks, looks after the children and fulfills husband's desires.

Salman (RA) went to visit Abu Darda (RA) (they were both made brothers when the latter came to Madinah), but he had not

yet reached home. Umm Darda (RA) complained to Salman (RA) that her husband has no need for her anymore. He fasted during the day and prayed at night. Abu Darda (RA) came and offered food. Salman (RA) implored his host to break his fast (since it was a voluntary one) and made him eat with him. He stayed the night with them and prevented Abu Darda (RA) from praying and said: "Your body has a right over you; your Lord has a right over you and your family has a right over you. Fast and do not fast. Pray and spend some time with your family and give everybody their due right." When morning came, they made ablution and went to the mosque where they narrated the saga to the Prophet (SAW) who said: "Salman spoke the truth." (Bukhari)

RIGHTS OF HUSBAND AND WIFE OVER EACH OTHER

1. Not to reveal secrets. It's a general rule for both parties to guard each other's secrets. The Prophet (SAW) said: "The man who will be most wretched in status, in the Eyes of Allah on the Day of Judgment, will be the husband who confides in his wife and she in him, and then he goes and reveals her secrets." [Muslim]
2. Mutual advice. Spouses should advise one another in daily matters. It should be taken in account that one should point out the others mistakes with affection and each should accept their own faults.
3. Mutual consultation. This plays a great role in the development of a marriage. The husband should not belittle the opinion of his wife and vice versa.
4. True love between the couple. It is hard to have a successful marriage without love or its expression. Allah tells us that He has placed love and tranquility amongst mates. (c.f. Surah Ar-Rūm, 21)

2 Raising Of The Children

This section is divided into 6 parts, based on the child's age.

A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY

Islam teaches responsibility. In the following hadith the Messenger of Allah (SAW) draws our attention to the great responsibility of bringing the children up correctly.

Ibn ‘Umar (RA) reports that he heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say: “All of you are (like) shepherds and all of you will be asked about their flock (i.e. are responsible for them). The Imam (leader) is the shepherd of his subjects and he is responsible. A man is the shepherd for the people of his home and he is responsible (will be asked about them). A

woman is the shepherd of the home of her husband and she is responsible. Each of you is (like) a shepherd and each is responsible for his flock.” Agreed upon. It should be kept in mind that the parent will be asked about the child(ren). In the following parts, points will be raised and practical solutions will be offered to raise the children in an elegant manner.

START AT THE BEGINNING

Spouses need to make du’aa regularly and beg of Allah’s assistance to grant them the ability to raise the children in a manner that pleases Him. Also, the man needs to say the du’aa prescribed by the Prophet (SAW) at the time of having intimate relations with his wife. What a wonderful start it is when Allah is implored!

After the child is born, parents should try to follow the Sunnah carefully. Amongst the Sunnah acts is to call the athaan in the right ear of the child (although this may be debated), doing tahneek (chewing a piece of date and then taking the saliva on the finger and rubbing it in the

infant’s mouth), giving the child a good name, circumcising the child and doing the ‘aqeeqah (sacrificing a sheep for a girl and two for a boy). Following the Sunnah will bring only good.

Research has shown that a child is affected by certain things even before birth, so what about after birth? Therefore, parents should be on their best behaviour from the outset. They must be regular with their daily prayers, avoid foul language, remember Allah regularly, recite Quran and surround their child with a healthy environment.

SHIFTING GEARS- Birth to age 2

As children grow, many changes can be seen in them. They begin picking up things from the surroundings and copy what their parents do, like, a little boy would imitate his father if he sees him praying. Realizing this should be enough to drive parents towards being the best role models for their children.

The woman has to acknowledge that Allah has placed in her qualities that render her best suited to provide the child nurturing and tender loving

care. Generally, women are much more gentle, loving, patient and able to provide young children their basic needs. Not to say that men are incapable, but women just do this much better (while husbands assist). It is the mother who perhaps has the greatest influence on her child in the first years. Therefore, women are advised to strive hard and fulfill this role to the best of their ability.

Besides being on the best behaviour, parents also

have to be proactive in practically teaching their children right from wrong, etiquettes and steering them away from immorality.

Islamic manners and etiquettes can be taught from a very early age. Before feeding the child, parents should always say Bismillah audibly, then Alhamdulillah when they're done; say Alhamdulillah audibly, in front of the child when they sneeze, say the du'aa for leaving and reentering the home audibly and so forth. It's quite amaz-

ing how children pick up bits and pieces of each du'aa from this early age.

Kids like to play with other kids, so parents must struggle to find good families for the kids to be friends with. Of course, they do not want their kids to learn bad habits from the other kids. If parents see or hear anything which raises concerns, the matter has to be addressed immediately.

A SOLID FOUNDATION- Ages 2 to 5

As the kids will grow older, their perception and understanding of the surroundings will evolve and thus more their questions will be. At this stage, it is important for the parents to communicate with their children; make sure to listen to them and address their questions.

Parents have to start teaching them 'aqeedah (belief system) in a slightly more "formal" way. For example, on seeing the beautiful trees, ask the child, "Who made these?" the same with the sky, the mountains etc. Make them understand why it is important to say Bismillaah before eating and Alhamdulillah after finishing a meal. If parents teach their children these matters from an early age, they are providing them with a solid foundation.

Furthermore, when parents find their children learning to read, they should make it a priority to teach them the Arabic alphabet along with the alphabet of the language they use in their daily lives. The primary goal behind this is to enable kids to read Quran and understand it. Imagine, the reward parents will get every time their children would recite Quran. In case, parents are unable to teach the children Arabic, then they must do their best to find a tutor; it is one of the best investments they will ever make. In addition, children should be assisted in memorizing portions of Quran as well. In this regards, starting with simple Surahs like Surah Ikhlas, will do the

work. One way to help kids is by letting them listen to these Surahs being recited on recordings; and perhaps if they hear them in children's voices they will be encouraged to learn more.

Apart from that, children love stories. Before they learn to read, they love being read to. Similarly, super heroes are a big thing for kids. They look for heroes and role models. The Mom and Dad are a child's first role model and hero. But as they grow, they look for others as well. Before they get hooked on Superman and others, they should be taught about the Prophets, the Sahaabah and other great Muslim personalities. They should be told true stories of bravery and heroism from the lives of these genuine heroes so they aspire to be like them.

Although salaah, fasting, hijaab and such matters are not compulsory on children yet, it doesn't mean parents should not teach them these matters. Parents have to show the children how pleased they are if they see them praying or making such gestures; this may be in the form of a huge hug, a gift, or a simple thumbs-up. And regarding little girls, by the time they reach five, parents should start making certain that they dress them modestly and be selective of the clothing.

These early years are extremely important and as a parent one needs to make certain that the child has a solid foundation to build upon.

STRENGTHENING THE FOUNDATION- Ages 5 to10

Parents need to realize that children require much of their attention. Putting them into child care just so parents can relax is wrong. However in some cases people don't have much of a choice, otherwise it is an injustice and cop-out.

As the kids get older, parents need to talk to them more about the importance of salaah, fasting etc. in the life of a Muslim. Get it in their knowledge why they need to observe these rites and that the reward is huge (i.e. Jannah). Teach them the purpose of life (to worship Allah). By the time they have reached age seven, parents should insist that they pray and by the time they

reach age ten, they must be disciplined if they are negligent towards the prayers. They should be told that this is part of who they are.

Let them know, Islamic studies are more important than any other subject, no matter what that other subject may be.

The matter of friendships will continue to be an issue throughout the life of the child. Just be very cautious and extremely careful in this regard. Help them choose friends and know who they are.

Now come the preteen years and what a challenge they can be!

PRE-TEENS AND TEENS

Once the kids reach pre-teens and teens, the challenges become somewhat different. At this crucial stage, things will be easier if the parents had put in conscious effort when kids were younger.

In these years of life, children may become somewhat rebellious. The reason being the type of things they are exposed to in the media and on TV and movies. In addition, there are many physiological changes in their bodies and this contributes to the issue as well. The matters must be tackled head on with wisdom. By now one should be discussing matters of puberty with their children. The basics of this may be taught even before this point for some but for most kids they

definitely need to learn about it by the age of 12. Whether parents like it or not, their children will learn about sexuality and similar matters from someone other than them. Therefore, parents need get to it before others do so that kids can have a proper understanding of it. Moreover, kids should be made comfortable so they can come back with questions they may have, after hearing other "versions."

Keep in mind, issue of salaah should be taken seriously. In order to facilitate the things, parent should write a note to the school teacher as well as the principal, explaining that the child will be taking a few minutes daily to offer salaah.

Even in these times of turmoil, we have hope, we have Quran, Sunnah and our deen Islam. Like they say, it's never too late, how about starting from today? It's time when we should get out of the fabled illusions and the vain dreams, and be the splinters of light in the dark. It's time when we should be the ripple of life in the dead pond and, transform and transcend. Let not the silhouettes of Satan break our spirit, let our roots stretch like veins, pumping life throughout the cosmos; let our wings outspread to cross the walls of time to emerge from the ocean of history and deck the earth with peace and serenity. More one delays, the more one has to pay!



Ants are amazing insects. Have you seen how they crawl in a single file and then always stop for a tiny fraction of a second to greet another fellow ant? I also read that they can bear a weight of more than 50 times their own body's; not to mention that they were farming more than 50 million years before we even got the idea of planting crops! Talk about being smart. But the thing I find the most amazing is their unwavering determination. Watch an ant that has come across a morsel of food. It would circle it, climb upon it- perhaps make an estimate of its dimensions in its "apparently little brain". Then it would haul it. If too big, it would call its mates for help. But no matter how big the size or how far its ant hole is, you would never hear it say, "Oh this is too heavy. I don't think I can make it". More so, if the ant gets stuck somewhere, it would try without fail to get itself out of that situation, even if it means repeating the rescue effort a hundred times. Call it determination, perseverance or self-governance, the ant is indeed inspiring.

Ants are not the only remarkable creatures I have come across with. Oh yes, I can cite stellar examples from the human species as well. I

know a man who had to bear unremitting insults, mockery and threats for an entire lifetime on account of a message which conflicted with the political and social interests of his adversaries. Not only did he stay in a valley without food and water for three years but was also driven out of his beloved homeland by the very same people who claimed kinship to him. Despite growing up without a father, seeing the loss of his mother and grandfather at a very young age and having to listen to slights from his blood relatives whom he grew up with, his resolve was unshakeable. The Quran beautifully sums his personality in the following words, "And verily, you are on an exalted standard of character" (68:4).

Yes I am talking about Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH). He provides us with exemplary standards of patience and perseverance in the face of the hardest of trials. His Sahabah are in their own league as well. Hazrat Summaya (R.A.) was the first woman to be martyred in Islam. She was inflicted with physical torture and forced to renounce her religion but she did not waver in her faith. Hazrat Bilal (R.A.) was made to lie on the scorching desert sand with a large rock tied to his chest so that he could not move. He

never had second thoughts about his decision to accept Islam. Hazrat Salman Al Farsi waited for years and travelled hundreds of miles in his search for Truth. Hazrat Abu Jandal, one of the Muslims who were kept in captivity with the Quraish, managed to escape but was handed back to his captors on account of the Treaty of Hdaybia and had to bear further torture. When things looked bleak, none of them bailed out on Islamic Monotheism nor considered their pursuit worthless; rather they consciously chose to fight back.

However, none of these people would have been able to achieve what they did had it not

“Knowing that Allah (SWT) holds the reins to your life, you would know that every bump that comes your way is His way of stopping you from falling into an open manhole”

been for the Power of Allah SWT. It was Allah who put it in their hearts such firm resolve which even having a face-off with death could not shake. They saw a light at the end

of the darkest of tunnels: the light of Allah’s Nur. This Nur made every difficulty bearable, every hurt less painful and every search meaningful. And this is the lesson that these inspiring people and nature give to us: never give up. Mastering this lesson is impossible unless Allah (SWT) is willing to provide help. If we seek solutions to and patience for bearing with our gamut of problems, we need to truly believe that it could not be possible without the decree of Allah (SWT). Once in this mindset, refer

to the solutions’ manual i.e. the Quran, which provides us with a simple prescription to our weaknesses based on just two verses.

Allah (SWT) says in Surah At-Talaaq, “And whosoever puts his trust in Allah, then He will suffice him”. If one can comprehend the enormity of this statement, I would say that he has no reason to worry about anything. Allah (SWT) is Al-Qadir, the Omnipotent. He is able to do anything that He wishes. He can set right that career you have been struggling to make if He wills, or give you health which just seems to decline over the years. Knowing that Allah (SWT) holds the reins to your life, you would know that every bump that comes your way is His way of stopping you from falling into an open manhole. The second verse that one needs to truly believe in order to master perseverance falls in the last ruku of Surah Baqarah, “Allah burdens not a person beyond his scope”. It would be a huge sense of relief if we start accepting that whatever calamity comes our way, Allah (SWT) has already equipped us with the arsenal to deal with it. The loss of a loved one feels too big, or the burden of poverty too heavy- yet, surviving this trial is possible because Allah (SWT) is well-aware of our Fitrah and would never impose on us a burden greater than we have the capacity to deal with.

I would wrap up in a few simple words. Persevere, like the small ant. Be determined, like the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Smile in the face of difficulties, knowing that Allah (SWT) is always with you. It comes down to a small cycle of events: pray, try, pray; and know that Allah (SWT) will reward you immensely and compensate for all the hardships that you bore, at least in the life to come insha’Allah.

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

On no soul does Allah Place a burden greater than it can bear. (Quran 2:286)



No matter how productive or positive a person is, they can face a temporary “inability-to-be-productive-error” which makes us indulge in many common social mistakes such as **not wanting to maintain good relations with people around us.**

It was narrated that Abu Hanifa said to Dawud al-Taa'i, “Why do you prefer seclusion?” Dawud replied, “To struggle against myself to leave disputing.” Abu Hanifah said, “Attend meetings, listen to what is said, and remain silent.” Dawud said, “I have done so, but I have found nothing heavier than this.”

Man is undoubtedly a social creature – no matter how hard you try to draw a safe circle, you have to socialize and progress in society. While you can't always choose who crosses your path, let's look at 5 ways you can maintain good relationships with the people around you.

Tip #1 Positivism never fails:

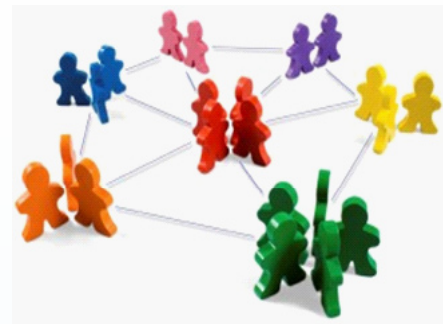
The first most important tip is to be kind to your own self, be merciful to your soul, let it breathe full, nourish it with positive thoughts and let that shine out to the whole world. This will make people around you get immersed within your positive vibes. Throw yourself in the sea of negativity about everything and everyone and nothing will reach you back except the echoes of people who will be too afraid to communicate with you or either reluctant to be around you for any good reason. So be positive; a positivist never fails.

Tip #3 Bring kindness in your speech and actions/be wise: It liberates.

When was the last time you did something embarrassing like raise your voice in an argument, only to regret your decision? The damage it brings is more to our own selves. We hurt ourselves and we hurt others. Secondly, we disappoint even the loved ones around us with such intense low-to-the-ground behavior. The result? Jeopardized relations. If you're a victim of it, you just need to spend 2 quality

Tips to Maintain Good Relations with People Around You

Pervisha Khan



Learning to be productive in relations

Tip #2 Control your tantrums:

How easily we get annoyed by even the slightest of things! And how hard it becomes to overcome this tantrum behavior. But without self control, you cannot achieve excellence. So give your best to all people – family, friends, and strangers – for the sake of your own soul and don't throw your tantrums over people. Those who have done you no harm do not deserve it, and those who have made you angry don't care of your anger; so why the fuss to exhaust yourself? Think about it. “And speak nicely to people” [2:83].

minutes working it out. This exercise is called Recall and Heal. Think of a situation which had been harmful for you in the past, perhaps where you think you could have practiced self-discipline but didn't. Now recall your response made to it when it occurred. Was it too controlled or foolish and avoidable? Learn a lesson from this embarrassment and make a note to yourself to go wise next time with people. It makes you a wise person and liberates.

"If they pass by some vain speech or play, they pass by it with dignity." [25:72].

Tip #4 Don't mind the strangers:

There are people with whom we interact on a daily basis and people who we see occasionally (and perhaps do not even interact with), but our reputations do. These strangers can be our far off relatives or colleagues or very old friends. Please do not forget, it's equally important to keep good relations even with those strangers that we hardly know. Treat them well. If you happen to be in the same environment as they are, be soft with your eyes when passing by them. Use your body language to interact positively without using words. If angered by them, keep silent. This keeps our contacts tied to us in good shape and also makes our stranger enemies still respect us.

Tip #5 Moment for reflection:

Your reward is with Allah and not with people, so take a moment to reflect. Once you realise this life is a test and your actions are observed by Allah Almighty, you'll begin to absorb the big-

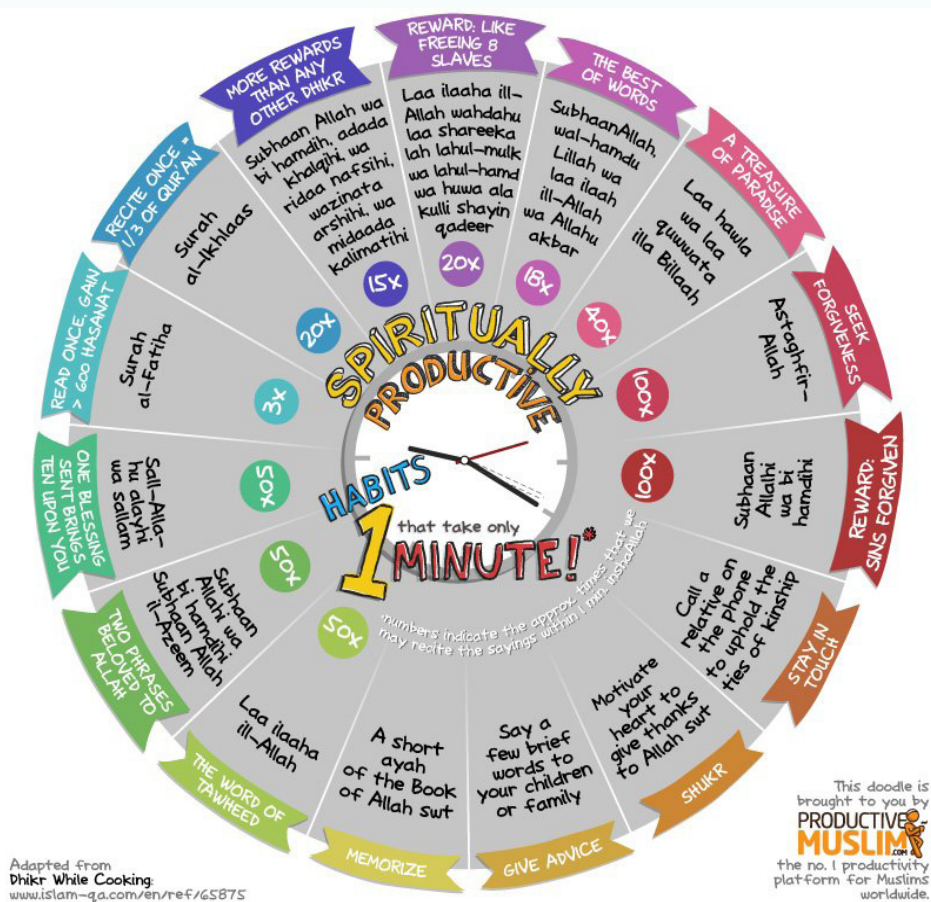
ger picture – and then the affairs of this world seem to look so small. Forgiving people becomes easy. Ignoring the mistakes of people and going smooth with them becomes your nature. Why? You have finally given up the malice of your heart for the happiness of Allah!

If you give your best to the people and then wait for your reward from your Lord, you become abundant with blessings without you even knowing it. SubhanAllah. That's the beauty of practicing good manners like the Prophets and Pious people of Muslim Ummah.

And now to raise your spirits high, let me end on a positive note:

"Peace be upon you, because you persevered in patience! Excellent indeed is the final home!" [13:24].

Read more: <http://productivemuslim.com/maintain-good-relations-with-people/#ixzz2AeDBXw5O>



GREETING THE Unknown

USAMA BIN AZMAT
Class of 2015
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I wanted to share a beautiful personal experience. Few years back I heard a Hadith as follows:

"Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr (RA): A man asked the Prophet (SAW), "What sort of deeds or (what qualities of) Islam are good?" The Prophet (SAW) replied, "To feed (the poor) and greet those whom you know and those whom you do not know." (Book Of Belief, Sahih Al-Bukhari)

I decided to make it a habit. At that time I used to travel a lot by public transport. I started saying "Salam" to random passersby, from home to the stop, from the last stop to the academy, even at the market, going there and coming back or at any other public place. It was interesting but it was difficult. I felt like a fool saying Salam to three or four people coming towards me, in a row. I had to be loud enough. I sometimes skipped one or two men before offering my next Salam.

I chose soft targets like sweepers, street vendors, relatives, police and army men on guard duties. I moved a step further and tried to take the lead in greeting children. I started from my own neighborhood. It was a real tough task; saying Salam to someone out in the street 5 or 10 years younger than you, strikes head on with your pride, ego and arrogance. But I kept trying and still am. It's a really nice feeling, as if you are making friends all around.

Different people responded in a variety of ways. Some of them were delighted and returned Salaam with greater excitement. Others did not even bother to slightly move their lips. In the beginning, and somewhat even now, desires showed up to badly abuse those guys who did

not return the Salam, but I had to stop myself.

The policemen were really gentle; they returned Salam with greater pleasure. It was as if they were starved for respect. Anyhow, they seemed very pleased upon being greeted. The other good response comes from the young ones. They appeared perplexed upon being greeted from a man of my age, but returned Salam in the very same way.

Some people came up with a beautiful smile. It all went on like that for about a year or so. Then the return of my investments started to appear. And it was amazing. The young lads, whom I used to salute, started to come up to me and took lead in offering Salam (even sometimes when I forgot to do so). If you are able to see respect in a 10-12 year olds' eyes, it is an achievement. I had this by Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala's Taufeeq. He (subhanahu wa ta'ala) hides our ugly faces very well under the beautiful veil of forgiveness.

There is not enough space to share the number of experiences I had; good, bad, exciting, overwhelming. The only thing I know is that it makes me feel good; I am a source of stir in the society. To be a chosen one for some good reason is a real blessing. And I ask myself "Can it be me?"

I dare not claim anything but just wanted to share an experience, I reckon, worth sharing and can bring a positive change around each of us.

Please try it at home, you will get addicted to the euphoria inflicted upon you by the eyes, astonished yet pleased, following you. Just give it a try. May Allah (subhanahu wa ta'ala) help us in our every good intent.

ABU YUSUF'S

Forgotten Ones

What will make us thank Allah (SWT)? No matter how happy and wealthy we are, we still have something to complain about. There is always something that we want. Well, read about what *she* wanted:

Today's sun is cruel. There seems to be no ray of hope. Just like a burning ball, it is ready to burn every moment of her life. She knows that today is her last day. Very carefully, she tries to stand up, putting both her hands on the wall, then on her knees and then applying full force to lift her weak body up so that she can go out and look for some food. As she tries to move, the world goes dark before her eyes and she knows she is going to fall down. She quickly grabs the wall and stays there for a moment until she gets her vision back.

She has been in this condition since three weeks and is quite used to it now. She looks at her hands: they are black with a thin layer of flesh on it. Her heart is barely pumping. She starts walking on the same old path, looking here and there for any insect she might catch or any leaf she might find. The scorching sun is no less than a killer but she has to bear with it.



As she moves, she remembers how she used to play in these lands a few months ago. Life was hard but she was happy living with her entire family; at least they were alive then. She could complain to her mother if she was hungry or could play with her younger brother whenever he would cry out with hunger. She would see her father go out daily in search of food and water, returning every night with a handful of stuff to eat or sometimes with nothing at all. When times were difficult, she could put her heavy head on his shoulders and feel the calm seeping in. But now she is walking alone doing everything on her own.

It has been an hour now since she left home and she is still without food. The air pressure above her and the gravity below her are working together to bring her to her knees. She still does not give up her search for food. But God has something else planned for her! God is kind so He decides to take away all her problems and to give her a peaceful sleep.

Quran 2:245

She looks back to find out that she has moved a very short distance from her home. She collapses on the hot earth. It hurts her but she doesn't scream because she wants to save every bit of her energy in order to stay alive for a minute longer. She realized that she will not be able to stand up so she doesn't even try to. She lies there, facing the sky in the hope that someone will see her and bring for her something to eat or the sky will split into two halves and someone would come down with some water to drink.

As she is lying there, she sees a cloud. She wants to fly and take every drop of that cloud in her mouth. The sun is burning her whole body. It's definite that she'll die now and the suffering will end. She does not want any food or water anymore. She only wants someone to be with her in this moment of agony. She wants

to hold someone's hands and die crying but there is no one.

It is time to fly! It is time for the end- the end of every scream, every cry let out in pain. It's the end of every misery, every hardship, every tear that she shed! She only wants peace. She turns around and faces the earth. She is slowly dissolving in it. She buries her head in it and lets herself melt into it. She closes her eyes and takes her last breath...

After writing this, the glass of water I drink is a big blessing for me; the delicious food I eat every day, the fancy clothes I wear and the big house I live in. I have some really complicated books to waste my time on and a cell phone to talk to my friends. I have every type of food available along with cold water to drink from the refrigerator. I have everything except a heart which can feel the pain of those people out there who only want a sip of water to survive or the pain of those who want someone to smile at them with love.

Can't I just give these people a chunk of my food? Can't I give them one sip of water out of my full glass? Can't I give them a smile? No, I can't give them all these things because I do not care and I certainly do not have a smile of my own!

■.....■

Laugh out Loud

Patient: The problem is that obesity runs in our family

Doctor: No, the problem is that no one runs in your family

Amna was very depressed, while it was just yesterday that she had felt on top of the world. She had received her acceptance letter from the medical college she had always dreamt of going to. It was one of the best in the country. It was all she had ever wanted. Or, at least, so she had believed. Today she had called Sara, her best friend since childhood, to discuss about their new college, dresses and all the exciting time they would be having. Sara's voice had cracked as soon as she heard Amna and she had broken into tears. She had been rejected from the college.

Amna was unable to comprehend this. It was just not possible. They had been together for ever since she could remember. They had planned every moment of their future together. They *had* to be together in college. A heavy weight had landed on her heart. Every tiny speck of the happiness she felt yesterday had vanished.

4 years later...

Amna is at her cousin's wedding, having the time of her life. She is busy decorating the stage with others. All of them are waiting for the bride. Someone comments on how pretty Amna is going to look when she becomes a bride. Amna smiles wholeheartedly and her eyes twinkle.

Though she is very happy she feels a permanent void. It has been six months since her mother died

Welcome to

Duniya

after fighting with leukemia for a year. When Amna had first seen her lifeless body, she had been totally devastated. She had lost the will to live. She had never imagined a life without her mother...

Welcome to duniya! The place where every happiness is temporary, the place where every achievement gives joy for a fleeting moment only. That's why we have to work for Jannah!

Welcome to duniya! The place where every sadness is temporary. There is always something to fill in the space. Yet, regrets and painful memories remain. That's why we have to work for Jannah!

Welcome to duniya! The place where every loved one leaves us at some point. Either they bury us under heaps of sand or we bury them. No one can be with anyone forever. That's why we have to work for Jannah!

Our main problem is that we're looking for the wrong thing in the wrong place. Our condition is exactly like that of the old lady who was looking for something in the light of a street lamp. A boy came up to her, in order to help her out. After a long time the boy asked the lady, if she could recall the exact location where she had lost her pin. The Lady said "Yes, I lost it in my bedroom."

We are just like that old lady. We spend our whole lives looking for perfection, contentment and everlasting luxuries in this duniya. These things were *never* supposed to be found in this duniya. The Creator simply hasn't placed these things here. Their desire has been put in us though, so that we work hard to get Jannah where the perfection, contentment, and everlasting luxuries do exist. That's why we have to work for Jannah!

Our perception of things should change and our focus should shift, for our own good, to the real success, which is definitely going to last *forever*. May Allah (SWT) grant us the ability to become people with whom He is pleased till their last breath and make us amongst those who are bestowed with His Jannah in return for their endeavours! Ameen!

**Sahih
Bukhari**
**Volume 8, Book 76,
Number 425**

Narrated Mujahid:

'Abdullah bin 'Umar said, "Al-lah's Apostle took hold of my shoulder and said, 'Be in this world as if you were a stranger or a traveler.'" The sub-narrator added: Ibn 'Umar used to say, "If you survive till the evening, do not expect to be alive in the morning, and if you survive till the morning, do not expect to be alive in the evening, and take from your health for your sickness, and (take) from your life for your death."

The Path to Paradise

ALIYA MUGHAL

FOUNDATION UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES

A messenger of Allah with Mount Toor his destination,
Met on his way a thief and a pious man,
Eager to know about them; using divine communication,
The Prophet asked Allah about His plan.

Lord gave a question for both the souls
“Go to the pious man of the two”,
Ask if an elephant could pass through a needle’s hole,
The answer came, “It could never come true!”

The question was then given to the thief,
“I steal and this is how I financially batten,
But if you ask what is my belief,
I say, if Allah wants then anything can happen.”

On hearing the answers Lord said, “On Judgement day,
The thief for his belief will rest in PARADISE,
For the pious man the only thing I can say,
His one sin has led to his DEMISE!”

Finding faith

INAASH ISLAM
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA

In this day and age, to be a Muslim girl is a blessing. Alhamdulillah.

All my life I had never really tried to be the perfect Muslim girl. Sure, I stayed within my limits, didn't do anything crazy, but I wasn't praying five times a day, neither did I have a close connection with Allah (SWT). It was only when I moved away from home to attend college did I realize what I was truly missing out on.

Independence is a funny thing. Like my Mom says, with it you can either take the high road or the back road. I've heard many things about kids going wild when they leave home; spending all their parents' money, getting drunk, doing drugs etc. With the kind of trusting relationship I have with my parents, I just couldn't do that. Alhamdulillah, Allah (SWT) guided me on the right path where He showered His blessings upon me, and for that I am forever thankful.

I was excited to be living on my own. A nineteen year old, petite, hijabi Pakistani girl living on her own? Gosh, the thought was enthralling. I couldn't wait to be independent. Not that I was dying to leave home, no. I just wanted to get a glimpse of the world, step out of the city of Islamabad where I had been living for most of my life. I enrolled in the undergraduate program at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, with the intention of majoring in Sociology. I got myself a nice little apartment, close to a small mosque which served as the Islamic center of Lafayette, and set about trying to find a roommate. After what didn't seem like very long, I ended up with an American Muslim revert with whom I bonded with very well. I was a tad bit concerned that I wasn't the exact picture of an ideal Muslim who could provide the perfect impression of Islam. So, I prayed

to

Almighty Allah to help me represent Islam, as it should be. And SubhanAllah, as always, Allah (SWT) answered.

But as the saying goes, God works in funny ways. Rather than me helping my roommate become a stronger Muslim, she helped me become the Muslim that I had always needed to be. We both offered our prayers together, and sometimes fasted on Mondays and Thursdays, as is the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). I could feel rejuvenation in myself when I knelt down in prostration to Allah (SWT). I was sincere in my *duas*; more sincere than I had ever been before. It was a wonderful feeling.

Since my roommate and I lived near the city mosque, we developed a habit of going to Jumma prayer. This is one of the things that I had never experienced in Pakistan, which is unfortunate, because the experience that I have acquired from going to Jumma prayer is invaluable. My mosque has a wide variety of Muslims, from Arab to Somalian, Pakistani to Kenyan. Our Imam was Lebanese, a jovial man, who loved to laugh and joke, but when it came down to serious matters, he meant business. Every khutba I had the pleasure to attend was invigorating. Learning about the life of the Prophet (SAW), the lives of the Companions, a dissection of current events with an Islamic point of view; every single khutba mesmerized me. Do the Maulvi's back home also have the same effect on the audience as my Arab Imam has? If not, they are in dire need of training.

Considering that it is not wajib, or required for women to attend Jumma prayer, not many

I WAS EXERCISING IN THE PARK ONE DAY WHEN A LADY IN HER MID-50'S INTRODUCED HERSELF TO ME AND TOLD THAT SHE ADMIRE THE FACT THAT I WAS WEARING THE HIJAB AND EXERCISING SHOWING THE WORLD THAT A MUSLIM WOMAN CANNOT BE LABELED AS 'OPPRESSED'.

Muslim women come to pray in congregation, but the ones who do are incredible. I have met fantastic ladies, differing in shape, size, colors, mannerisms, accents; it's ridiculous. Knowing each and every one of them allows me to understand the variety of Muslim women in the US. It is unbelievable to see the married women balance work and children and still find the time to come to the mosque to pray. The single or divorced women find the time to socialize after Friday prayer but soon rush off to pick up their kids or catch a class because they are getting late. Muslim Superwomen I call them. My fondness for them has increased over time, and I can only aspire to be as strong willed as most of them. They are indeed my second family.

Often times I have been asked by friends and family members back home how I have been treated in public, considering the fact that I wear hijab and live in what is called the 'racist' part of America. I have, time and time again, told them that despite the notoriety the South has gained concerning racism, I have yet to see any negative behavior towards me as a Muslim. Honestly, the worst reaction I have ever gotten is a long hard stare from this old lady in a mall- a stare that I met with a broad grin across my face, and a look in my eyes that said, "Hi. How you doing today?" As a matter of fact, I have had some amazing reactions from strangers who are kind enough to tell me how they feel. For example, I was exercising in the park one day when a lady in her mid-50's introduced herself to me and told me that she admired the fact that I was wearing the hijab and exercising, showing the world that a Muslim woman cannot be labeled as 'oppressed'. I really appreci-

ated her comment and I am not ashamed to say that I probably walked half a mile with a silly smile on my face.

Probably one of my greatest memories of living in the US would be attending my first declaration of Shahada. For those of you who do not know, a person who wishes to become Muslim must recite the Shahada, which is the profession of faith. SubhanAllah, this happened during Ramadan, where a young American man decided that he wanted to become a Muslim. The Imam gathered all the men around. In the middle of the pulpit he held his index finger up and the young man did the same. Slowly, so the man could repeat after him, he recited the Shahada and ended it with an AllahuAkbar! The tension that had built up during the recitation of the Shahada was enticing. You could feel something special in the air, like something beautiful was about to happen. SubhanAllah, we gained another Muslim brother that day, and I wish upon all the Muslims of the world that they get to experience someone embracing Islam, for it is one of the best feelings in the world.

Coming to the US has indeed been a wonderful experience for me. Who knew that coming to a dominantly Christian society would help me become stronger in faith! The irony is just astounding. When life gives you lemons, you make orange juice, eh? I know now to always trust in Allah's plan, for He knows best. Al-hamdullilah, He gave me the opportunity to be where I am today, to experience what I have experienced, and to be lucky enough to be able to share this with you. Peace and Blessings Upon You.

Some Summer

DR ASMARA A. MALIK

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Some summer, I will fall into memories as blue
as the ionosphere merging into the black orbital
embrace of Earth, my cranium disintegrating
into your old photographs, cerebrum unflowering
into neuronal petals, glinting with star-streams
reflected in the silent music of these unspiralling
gyri. Some summer, I will tell you why I long
to peel away my skull, leave my brain receptive
to the starlight, watch my youth mutate, run rampant
upon the nations, drown out the unsignal of static
solitude-- any thing's better than the sight
of Margalla, blue in the bright after-rain sunlight,
fluffed over with clouds-- uncaring and arrogant,
knowing I will be just another grave soon; don't let me
mourn the loss of everything I never had. Why must I
remember you in all the places you won't be, the soft
silence of your passing will be ghost-spaces, your
favourite haunts bubbling into empty phantom-aches
in my chest, the light in the corridors dimmer than how
I remember it, fragile and distant-- wholly unmine,
hostile with whispers of an adulthood I will never
be prepared for. Some summer, other kids will stash
their hoards in these lockers, rip off our names, erase
our ever having locked our burdens there, callous
as only youth can be. Some summer, I will walk alone
through the afternoon light of our lobby, fiberglass
roof cataracted over with the accumulated rains
of our years here and not look up, not look around, not
wanting to realize-- you won't be sitting on the spindly
benches, won't be sneaking up behind me, won't be
here. Some summer, I will be old, it will have been
ten years since we last spoke and I will look up
at Islamabad's unstarry sky-- wonder,
if some summer,
we were ever
this alone.

Are you love-sick? You know the symptoms. You can't stop thinking about them. Your heart flutters at the sight of them like a desperate sparrow caught in a trap. A mere thought of them can bring an inch long smile on the face. With them the world looks cheery, the sun shines brighter, the wind has a softer touch. You think this must be what it feels like to be in love. Well, hate to break your fantasy, dear bro or sis, you are as far from truth as you can be. What you are feeling starts not with L but D. You desire. You don't love. You've experienced Hawah not Muhabba. And there are big differences between the two. Allow me to reveal the true nature of the two for you to define for yourself what you feel and hopefully re-evaluate and reinforce your relationships, bidnillah.

Sh. M. Akram Nadwi says that desire is
nates in you and then gets all over you. You
are weak and that desire is

something that origi-

SUNDAS ARSHAD'S

LOVE

&

DESIRE

strong in the relation-

ship. It could make you miserable, it could make you
happy when it's fulfilled. It has power over you. The

desire goes away when the object of desire leaves. And the nature of the

dunya is that the things we desire (like looks) are inherently wired to fade away. The person
you can't seem to live without will have to die at one point in time. The money toil will go away sooner or later.
Therefore, not only are you weak, you are also "mad" (if I can say that) after a thing that will be taken away very
soon. You are debilitated, weakened and under a spell of something which doesn't and can't last long.

Muhabbah (or true love) is something different. In love, you are powerful and the agent of change. It involves
sincere intention and action from your part. It requires you to put your heart in the thing consciously and de-
liberately. Love means to do whatever you do with your whole heart in it. Your actions bring about fulfillment
for you whereas in desire another detached entity is supposed or (thought to) fulfill your emotional void and
even when it does, it does that temporarily.

A while ago I was listening to Sr. Megan's (Founder of WivesofJannah.com) talk which shed more light on this.
She said deep, true love is when two people are willing to give to and for each other selflessly. In marriage, desire
could be the binding emotion in the initial period but ultimately it's love, true sincere love that connects, binds
and grows two people together. In the first few days, when you fall into love (hopefully :D) it's all about your
selfish ego. It's all about how the other person makes you feel, how you want to be with them, (sounds like be-
ing love-sick symptoms, right? :P) but with time it takes will, it takes power. It takes your conscious generous
effort to have the lasting relationship. NOW, you are the agent of change. Now, it's for you to start working and
LOVING. Love is all about the other person. It's all about you willing to give a little bit or more of yourself to
make the other happy.

When it comes to the relationship with Allah (SWT), the same principal applies. Allah (SWT) says that if you
truly love me, then follow the Messenger (S). Here too, you love through your action. Verbal love only, in my
opinion, is the proof of deficiency itself. Love is that whatever you do, you put your heart in it. If you love Al-
lah, then put your heart in making the change He wants to see in you. That will be true Love.

"You should only say I Love You when it's completely obvious and does not actually need to be said," Boona
Mohammed

I pray that we are able to shake away the cobwebs of flimsy desires, take charge of our relationships and fill them
with love, care and compassion. I pray that we become givers who seek to increase the happiness of the other in
a relationship instead of being a person who wallows around to seek his/her pleasure only. Ameen.

WHY ARE OUR YOUTH FEELING A DEEP APPRECIATION FOR ATHEISM

Hassan Akhtar
FAST Islamic Revival Society



I am a student of BBA at FAST National University. As a student of business administration I meet people from different social classes and cultures on a regular basis. Such interactions led me to some experiences which I wish to share with the readers.

During my quest to understand Islam and behavior of current day Muslims, I learnt that people are confused about religion and they would point fingers at all views of religion. Some criticize merely the very concept of religion while others term Islam as nothing but a vested interpretation of religious elders. If you wish to answer them you find yourself caught in a fix. While they demand quick and to the point answers, their capability is subpar and they cannot understand 'to the point' answers. I had myself come across dozens of such instances during discussions with fellow students that I have been left with no choice but to analyze the reasons and present the results to the readers as a scientific research.

In this article I intend to discuss some of the issues which will help readers to understand the reasons that take us away from religion or, said another way, highlight the kind of behavior that distances us from religion.

I list them point-wise and subsequently try to explain them briefly:

1. Poor reading behavior
2. Dilemma of Superior-Inferiority complex
3. Low tolerance for listening
4. Lack of perseverance (Sabr)
5. Desire to be eccentric

The time in which we live, Muslims have given up on reading in general and religious education in specific. They abhor books and reading. The best tool in these times to learn community trends, i.e., facebook can be browsed to see that pages like 'burn books', 'hate books', 'throw out books', 'hate studies' etc are mostly liked by Muslim youth. Ironically this is the state of the group whose religion encouraged knowledge seeking the most and whose religion started from the very word that forms the basis of any kind of learning. Think for a while. Allah (SWT) did not talk to humans for nearly 610 years (570 A.D taken as birth year of the Prophet (SAW) and he was given prophethood at the age of 40) after Esa (AS) At that time kufr was at its peak, people worshipped many gods, they were exploited to circumambulate the Holy Ka'bah disrobed, they would bury new-born girls and tens of other deeds invoking the wrath of Allah (SWT). Then after 610 years what He deemed most important to tell mankind was 'Iqra' (to read). He did not tell mankind to 'bow', to 'pray', or 'to stop worshipping idols' straightaway. Instead He required the mankind to 'read'. Why? Because this would forever become the way to learn, acquire knowledge and to understand Lord's Will. Without following a rule that has been ordained as 'the' rule by Himself, no one will ever reach the apex, unless of course if He wills.

Another pitfall into which our society especially the learned youth has fallen is that of a superior-inferiority complex. They always pretend to be intellectually superior than oth-

ers. Either this is a learnt behavior enforced through mass propaganda, an escape from bitter self-realization, or both, is another debate. I have met countless people who exhibit such traits. They say that they avoid asking questions from scholars because their claim is that scholars will issue verdicts of kufr against them if they dared. Some even claimed that scholars can't answer their questions. In other words they wanted to impress that their questions needed a higher intellectual level to understand and yet more to answer. The funnier part is that when I insisted to know those questions which scholars wouldn't be able to answer, they turned out to be of very basic nature which even I, a novice in religious knowledge could answer. Some questions had direct and precise answers given in The Quran and for many in Hadith. This leads me to believe that by using expressions as they started with, their sole purpose was to impress me about their self proclaimed intellect!

The third dilemma faced by our youth is that they are not ready to listen to a complete answer. Questions, even if of one sentence may demand a lengthy explanation. They are very eager to put forth their questions but are not interested to give due time to know the answers. They get uneasy if the answer gets a little lengthy, like more than a few minutes. The best example of this behavior could be seen in anchor-run programs on state media where anchors would forcefully cut the argument short of the guest. The irony of the whole issue is that answering a person of low knowledge and often of low intellect requires the speaker to build the required background and then present a connected flow of data coupled with logical arguments. So unless one is willing to spend time to listen, one is bound to remain unanswered. I have personally faced this situation umpteen times. As a habit I always ask the inquirer about his previous knowledge-base

and most of the time to my dismay would find that they had not even read the translation of the Quran! Despite such a level of ignorance the inquirer would want me to respond to his question with a learned answer to which would require deep philosophical discussion, and that too in 10 or so sentences. I am therefore forced to infer that they do not like answers, they like appreciation for their questions to provide food to their ego and pride.

Willfully hiding in their cocoons for a long period finally shifts such people towards atheism because denial of a fact requires the shortest of arguments and this perfectly matches their lack of reading, the superior-inferiority complex and unwillingness to listen to an argument. In one sentence one can deny anything but in order to prove its existence one has to give evidences and argue which needs more time and requires the need to read and/or to listen.

It is imperative to note that the deen chosen by Allah (SWT) for the whole of mankind, i.e., Islam is for everyone. People are not of equal intellect and capabilities.

For a common man it is simple to follow. For philosophers it presents so much to think and ponder about that one life is short for a complete understanding. Atheism claims boundless freedom for man. They deny man's right to define bounds, thus treating religion as slavery launched by people with a desire to enslave humanity. This argument of boundless freedom appeals those who have undisciplined nature and so leading a disciplined life, i.e. following religious practices, is burdensome to them.

While Islam also denies the right of man in general to limit freedom of other human beings (except for training or trading) it also says that boundless freedom puts man at par with jungle beasts. Thus boundless freedom is an enchanting slogan but an illogical argument and an

“In one sentence one can deny anything but in order to prove its existence one has to give evidences and argue which needs more time and requires the need to read and/or to listen.”

unacceptable way to live. In Islam defining bounds only befit The All Knowing, The All Powerful. A Muslim is not free. He is bound by bounds defined by Allah (SWT) and is therefore His slave. Islam views all matters as complex equations and relations. It is not like science where we can study two variables assuming all other factors to be constant between two instances of the same experiment. This world is not defined by 'obvious' relations only. While the world has started to get deeper in their understanding of life, they have to come up, for example, with concepts such as NORA (Non-Obvious Relationship Awareness) as taught in 'Management Information Systems'. Allah (SWT) alone carries the ultimate knowledge of NORA. So when He commands, He considers all direct, indirect, obvious and non-obvious relationships and it is therefore in the best interest of the doer or the humanity in general.

It is more shocking when people criticize Hadith, i.e. "Sayings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)", by calling it 'illogical'. These people need to learn that no one's intellect and knowledge can match that of a prophet's who is guided by Allah (SWT), the All Knowing. Prophethood starts from where all worldly intellect put together ends. If logic can encompass all occurrences, behaviors, relations and consequences, why would the world need prophets? It is not that prophets talk about things which are illogical; it is simply that some things are beyond logic.

Lastly Quran invites man 'to ponder'. No one stops you to think but it doesn't really mean that if your logic cannot comprehend something, you simply deny it. If a child's brain is too small to understand the purpose of life it does not mean the child should immediately consider it as purposeless.

Allah (SWT) knows best. May He guide all of us towards the right path and keep us firm on it.
Ameen

Why it cannot be Chance?

HAMZA ANDREAS TZORTZIS

Some people who do not understand the impossibility of the universe coming into being by chance exclaim, "It could have happened by chance!" However would they say chance explains how an elephant was sleeping in their garage overnight? Or how a 747 ended up parked in their garden? Even after their irrational perspective is highlighted, they still hold on to the theory that the universe can exist due to chance. In response to this I would argue that it is not just about chance but something the theorists such as William Dembski call "specified probability."

Specified probability is a probability that also conforms to an independent pattern. To illustrate this, imagine you have a monkey in a room for twenty-four hours, typing away on your laptop. In the morning you enter the room and you see, "To be or not to be!" The monkey has miraculously written out a part of a Shakespearean play! What you may have expected is random words such as "house," "car," and "apple." However, in this case not only have you seen the improbability of typing English words – but they also conform to the independent pattern of English grammar! To accept this is just the result of blind chance would be irrational and counter discourse, as anyone can claim anything from this perspective. To put this in to context, British mathematicians have calculated that if a monkey did type on a laptop at every possible moment, it would take 28 Billion years (!!!) to produce "To be or not to be". In conclusion, accepting the chance hypothesis is tantamount to rejecting the existence of our own universe!

Since premises one and two are true, it follows that supernatural design is the most reasonable explanation for the fine-tuning of the universe to permit human life.

(Excerpt from "A Response to The God Delusion")

So you want to measure the strength of my eemaan by the length of my beard?

DR WAQAS AHMED

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It took just a few days to realize the fundamental flaw in my thinking; a few days of living outside that suffocation in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. The flaw had to do with the perception of external appearance in Islam. My students might be shocked to see me now in shirt and pants and supporting a short beard. It is an exquisitely sensitive and delicate issue for most contemporary Muslims with two apparently contradictory aspects, and hence, one needs to address both aspects.

I wrote in my first book that to underestimate and belittle the external aspects of Islam would be unfair and unwise. After all, Allah, the Most High, is both 'al-Zahir' (the Manifest) and 'al-Batin' (the Hidden). Concurrently, paying more attention to the externalities than what they deserve is potentially a larger and more complex problem. The Noble Prophet, peace be upon him, is reported to have said in an authentic ha-deeth, *"Indeed Allah does not look at your faces but rather looks at your hearts and your deeds."*



People would embrace Islam at the blessed hands of the Noble Prophet (may peace be upon him), but one would not find references to his immediate commands to them to change their appearances the very next day. That reflected his perfect understanding of human nature. It is a very complex and intricate matter. For some people, it comes naturally to alter their external appearance instantly concomitant with their inner state; however, it is also well known and observed that for others who may have more mature inner spiritual states, assuming a specific external appearance is irrelevant. By specific external appearance, I am referring to growing a long beard and assuming a certain dress, which may take the form of shalwar (elevated) kameez, or a traditional Arab *Thawb* (which is something I wore for many years, and still do on and off).

The issue about clothes is indeed complex, for not only are their religious injunctions to be mindful of but also something called 'adab' or proper etiquettes. All corporations have these; for example, banks require all staff to be dressed in button-down shirts with ties and dress pants and proper shoes. Now, if one shows up in a classic Hanes t-shirt and jeans with flip flops, how does that make one a less competent banker than the one in an Armani suit? It doesn't, but still 'adab' requires that there be a dress code. By the way, the most profitable tech company in the world i.e. Apple Inc. does not have a dress code.

One of the defining things about today's Islam is that external appearances still carry a lot of weight for ordinary folks. People will flock to a man with an '*amama*, a *thawb* and a long beard for an opinion or *fatwa* without any real knowledge of that man's status. To be clear, this is an admirable thing in and of itself that a reflection, albeit external, of religion is still offered tremendous respect, and I have had numerous firsthand experiences of this in

Turkey, Malaysia, USA, etc. where I have had to answer questions and lead prayers simply because I wore a *thawb* and had a longer beard than most of the other attendees.

Knowing my inner inadequacies, I always felt guilty about it. However, a more undesirable aspect of this 'standard' external appearance has manifested itself in complete rejection of those who do not 'fit in' this standard external appearance mold, and there are plenty of these molds. I suffered from this disease myself for years. I have met so many people in the last ten years who are wonderful Muslims but 'unfit' from this particular perspective, while at the same time I met those who were 'perfect fits' externally but seriously lacked spiritual foundations of the faith. So while one is free to keep a long beard, there is no justification to condemn those who keep short beards. Appearances are, after all, appearances. Anyway, condemnation is not permissible in matters where scholars have differed.

From a purely jurisprudential perspective, all four dominant schools of Sunni Islam consider completely shaving off the beard as impermissible, with the Shafi'i school being the most lenient and accepting a short beard covering the angle of the jaw as adequate. The length of the beard is a much more open matter, and numerous valid and differing opinions exist. The issue of clothes is similarly

“...external appearances still carry a lot of weight for ordinary folks. People will flock to a man with an '*amama*, a *thawb* and a long beard for an opinion or *fatwa* without any real knowledge of that man's status.”

quite flexible and lenient, as it should be. For nearly all Pakistanis, wearing a traditional Arab *thawb* would be practically impossible, as would a *pathan pugri* be for a Malaysian Muslim.

The most important aspect of men's clothes is that they should not be revealing body contours. One also has to take into account what is known in jurisprudence as 'urf' or popular custom. As long as that custom is not contradictory to Islamic law, it is not only considered permissible but rather according to several scholars, one should leave people on a practice if it is a popular custom even though it may be less than desirable, since forcing people to change may cause more 'fitna' or chaos. Imam Malik has a famous saying in this regard, "*Leave people on what they are.*"

As far as I am concerned, my assuming a certain external appearance (*thawb*, skull cap, which is again a recommended or neutral practice and certainly not mandatory, and a long beard) had multiple reasons. First and foremost, it was a protective social shield for me, and I cannot even begin to tell what a potent protective force it was. But that was for me, I cannot impose the same on others. Second and perhaps even more potent was that it

became an expression of my indignation to all those who chose not to assume my chosen external mold. Third, it was my way of protesting the injustices meted out to our country at the hands of both internal and external forces. But I began to realize years later that my external appearance reflected someone that I might not have been internally. In addition, there is another troubling aspect of an individual's appearance and others perceptions; we criticize in an instant those who even occasionally fall short of our expectations. Once one has assumed a certain religious external experience, everyone expects them to be in that state all the time and act disappointed if they see otherwise - that itself reflects the superficiality of the observer, and hence, the flaw in this approach. There is nothing wrong with wearing a shirt and pants while at work, and wearing an '*ammama* and *thawb*' when one goes to the masjid or to visit others.

Do not be disappointed... I may look different now because I am in a different environment and am not in need of that added layer of protection, but I am also more in line with who I am internally and am in no danger of being ostentatious.



"Know, that days are but hours, and hours are but breaths, and every soul is a container, hence let not any breath pass without any benefit, such as on the Day of Judgement you find an empty container and feel regret! Be aware of every hour and how it passes, and only spend it in the best possible way; do not neglect yourself, but render it accustomed to the noblest and best of actions, and send to your grave that which will please you when you arrive to it." – **IMAM IBN AL-JAWZI**

THE ULTIMATE BUZZ

NADEEM ASHRAF

The vast majority of us are, deep down when you think about it: selfish.

What I mean is most of us are always looking for things to make our life easier. We work & boy are we good at working, so that we could earn a decent wage so that we could buy nice food, clothing etc. We study hard so that we gain the best marks. "People would praise you & your family will be proud of you". It's a nice feeling! We spend time with the company of good friends because it feels nice; brings peace to the heart.

What else brings peace to the heart?

We take the car or other modes of transport to study or work because it's easier, or in other words, feels good. We find the 'best spouse' for marriage because it feels good. Those who are married know the blissful emotions they experience in a marriage. We attend weddings because it's a joyous occasion, it feels good! Those into football know the joy when a footballer scores an outrageously skilful goal or a bowler in the game of cricket clean bowls a batsman or even when your team wins! That buzzzzzz is immense.

When on holiday in a serene & picturesque location, inhaling the naturally beautiful surroundings is a very nice feeling. Not to mention that amazing feeling when the exams are over! Or that feeling when you have finally completed your studies; the burden

off the shoulders! Phew!

Even when we do a charitable act, we feel good because we've done a good deed!

So when you think about it & break down a typical modern life of a human, it comes down to always trying to feel good. Inner peace. Feel good factor. Gaining those little buzzes. I'm sure whilst reading this you can think of countless other emotions & experiences where you felt complete joy. But if you think about it carefully, it's always a temporal buzz. Never eternally lasting. So how can we make that joyful feeling last forever?

#The ultimate Buzz#

So these wonderful amazing feelings that we experience- the joy, the wonder, the ones I have mentioned above- imagine all of them in one gigantic experience: one massive buzz!

Now imagine or try to imagine being close, upfront & personal with the CREATOR of all these buzzing feelings....

...Surely that's the ultimate buzz!!

But for that we need to focus our lives & try to implement Islam on a daily level till death. To gain that ultimate buzz we need to sacrifice our small temporal buzzes in this life.

"Only in the remembrance of Allah (swt) can the heart find peace" Quran (13:28)

matters of *faith*

'I am a Muslim.'

This statement embodies my identity as a whole. My tongue easily shapes these words as I say them out loud. The statement is something that my mind knows. But the necessary question I ask myself is: 'do I believe it?'

'How much of my being believes that I am a Muslim?'

People, generally, are capable of saying and knowing many things. People's lives are rampant with such examples. If a person consumes too much of his favourite meals at a fast food outlet such as McDonald's, that person is most likely to get obese. With obesity comes the added burden of health problems that include morbidities such as high blood pressure, diabetes mellitus and heart disease. This person knows that his diet, so partial to fast food, is not good for him, and in the long run will ruin his or her health. But does he or she believe what they know? Is the belief strong enough that it will prevent this person from visiting McDonald's every other day? Will it take an actual heart attack for the person to refrain from his or her self-destructive habits? Then, it might be too late to turn back. Too late for regret.

Once the person has recovered, he or she will then be following a strict diet regimen, going on regular morning walks and daily afternoon exercises. Every now and then he or she will wonder, 'If only I had controlled my urge to eat; knowing it was bad for me, why didn't I believe it?'

If the fast food outlet is replaced by faith in the above example, the same principles apply. I, as a Muslim, have such thoughts in my head:

What will it take for me to actually believe? I have knowledge laid bare before me, then why don't I comply with the teachings of my religion, Islam? What makes my faith so weak? Perhaps, there is some error in my beliefs.

To have knowledge of something is beneficial, but to believe in it is an entirely different perspective. I know I am a Muslim. But how do I conduct myself to prove that I am one? I am no stranger to the edicts of Islam. The worrisome fact is that knowing all the teachings of Islam, how much do I act upon them? The answers are very clear. It is time I learn to believe them now.

When a Muslim truly believes with conviction that Allah SWT is watching over you, listening, guiding and helping along the way, you ultimately become more conscious of your thoughts, your actions and your dealings. When you put your trust in Islam, conform to it's commandments, you realise that you can never go astray. Even if limitless obstacles come your way, your belief will eventually lead you to your ultimate destination. You will feel as if your faith is building, becoming stronger. Gradually those around you will become aware of who you are, and what you stand for. As it is the truth; we are all walking and talking figures of our beliefs.

To have faith in Allah SWT is a fulfilling experience that is beautiful in itself. It stirs in you feelings of wonder, enveloping the heart and mind in a sanctum of peace and contentment. Once you place trust in Allah SWT, you surrender your complete self to the will of Allah SWT, accepting that Allah SWT will do what is best for you. The course your life takes is because there is a bigger purpose behind it that

only Allah SWT knows. Allah SWT will never give you anything more than you can handle. To believe in the will of Allah SWT, is to allow hope to spring. Hope for a better tomorrow. With hope stirring in the confines of heart and mind, comes the conviction to be patient. Thus, it is essential a Muslim never stops praying.

There is a wise saying: 'worry ends where faith begins'. There is no need for anxiety or apprehension, for Allah SWT helps us in subtle ways. If you ever feel your faith is beginning to dwindle, know that there's a way out. Prostrate before Allah SWT, come down to your knees, in an act of total submission, call Him when you are alone. Allah SWT is always listening and will open doors for you. We should be conscious of Him in our worldly affairs and He will bestow His mercy on us all, for He is the Most Merciful. There are times when many feel that things are not working the way they expect them to, it is imperative to remember that Allah SWT pulls us out of situations that are of no good to us and puts us on the path that is best for us.

Believe in Allah SWT. Know that what He is doing is indeed the best.

It takes a little bit of the spark of faith, but it is this that makes our inner selves so beautiful. You would have met people with charisma, who can steal the spotlight when they enter a room, or those who can charm you with their anecdotes and elite adventures. Yet, the ones that really leave an ever-lasting impression on your heart are those who themselves have hearts that are pure. Ordeals are a part of life but do not despair of Allah's mercy. In the least, they end up filling your heart with faith.

Before I close off this piece of what I call self-reflection, I would like to share these words by Yasmin Mogahed.

'Know that the path to Allah is not a flat one. Your iman (faith) will go up and down. Your ability to worship will go up and down. But, know that for every dip, there is also a rise. Just stay patient, stay consistent, don't lose hope and seek help in Allah. The path is hard. The path will have bumps and drops. But, like all things in this life, this path will come to an end. And that end will make it all worth it.'

Allah SWT says: 'Oh mankind, indeed you are ever toiling towards your lord, painfully toiling...But you shall meet Him' (84:6)



Singing to the Winds

It's funny how life's greatest lessons are learnt at the worst times - while cleaning out your cat's poo or walking into an open hole on the sidewalk....

Just this morning I was grumbling at the lack of bathroom vacancy at our place, and wondering how funny it is that the only time I hear of a writing contest is when the deadline is half a day away.

I was standing on the terrace with toothpaste dripping down my face waiting for D* to finish

singing the national anthem in the bathroom. It was cold, it was windy and D* has a terrible voice...my cat sings better than him...

Obviously, I wasn't in the best of moods. I mean who wants to get up at 7 in the morning on a holiday (23rd March) and brush their teeth on the family terrace, just so that they can make it in time for a contest deadline? Just as I was about to call it a day and jump back into bed, I heard laughter in the street outside. I peeked outside - with Colgate splashed on my face - and saw four men riding bicycles just round the corner. They

were 'mazdoors' (laborers) riding to their work. I was instantly struck by their optimism - four men sharing two bikes on a cold and brutally windy morning, with barely enough clothes on, and yet laughing and joking with each other as if they hardly had a care in the world. I may be an overly emotional person, but to me those men seemed like heroes from an old, romantic movie. We just don't have this brand of human beings anymore. Here I was, with every single blessing of God in my lap, and all I could think of was why I had to wait 5 extra minutes for the bathroom. These men weren't even sure if they could feed their kids in the evening, but they still **chose** to be happy and have fun. And suddenly I realized I had learnt one of life's greatest lessons - that no matter how tough my life becomes, it's my **attitude** that will secure the outcome, not fate. It is believing in things like fate and luck that's ruining our lives right now, not poverty or anything of the like. We chose to make our lives what they are. If only I can learn to be optimistic and inspired at every step of my life, I know I can choose my own destiny...because there is only one rule on God's earth: if you fight hard enough for it, it's yours.

I mean, when you come to think of it, whether you're bummed about your team's 11th loss at football or your continuous bad grades at school, if you choose to keep your head and hopes high and keep fighting for it, like those mazdoors, you are going to win it all in the end. Even in the bigger picture, whether it is Kashmiris fighting for freedom, or Pakistan struggling to end this era of purposelessness and underachievement, the magic solution is still the same: quit whining and get out there and give your best. **Choosing** to be happy and optimistic, having fun along the way, and always being inspired are the things that make the difference between a laughing winner and a dejected loser.

When I saw the 'mazdoors' ride out of sight, I smiled and thought, I want to be like them when life's wrong side comes knocking at my door. I want to be able to let out a roar of laughter and high five my friends when I'm in bucket loads of trouble. And ten years from now, I want to sing the national anthem to the winds when secret service agents chase me down the highway, like they do in the old, romantic movies...

Tawakkul

When truth reveals itself to you
And you understand its meaning
Life goes on and you step forward
You do what your Lord says
Still everyone makes fun of you
You get abused by people
And you think that your heart's going
to break
But you do not realise
Allah knows what you feel
You think everyone has left you
But Allah is always there with you

Allah loves you so O Muslim!
He doesn't test you with which you cant
bear
You do not understand what He does
Then why don't you just wait
Allah's going to reward you so
Why are you expecting from people? :)
When you do tawakkul
You see Allah's greatness
Just do what He tells
Then everything is going to be alright!
Believe me! :)

By
BINT-E-HAIDER

ETERNAL SLEEP

**MASHAAL
SAAD**

Class of 2016
Shifa College of
Medicine

Clouds shift
Swallowing the moon
And with it, all hints of light
But the dark doesn't scare me
She has become my friend,
My confidante
For only when she's around
Do my eyes trust themselves to be honest
And let the tears flow
She soothes me
Caresses my tear-stained cheek
And whispers in my ears
Words of comfort,
Strength

She tells me to wait for peace
But tonight I am inconsolable
"How long",
Ask I
"How long must I wait for the end?
This overwhelming pain
Is dragging me under
And try as I might;
Fight as I might
My strength wanes
And in moments of sheer weakness
The tears, they spill over"

"Shh", she says
"It's all going to be alright."
With that all is quiet
Not the kind before a storm
Rather the serene kind
Often witnessed
When the night is seen gliding forward
In the hopes of meeting the day
On the horizon

The moon manages to break through
My eyes take in my surroundings

Suddenly I know I am not alone
A presence lurks in the shadows
It approaches me
I should be afraid of this specter
Should I fear for my life
But then I ask myself
What good is this life?
This existence without my purpose?

So I smile and I wait...
A welcome numbness
Washes over me
I am desensitized
The presence now stands next to me
I feel it brush across my eyes
Tenderly, as if to wipe my tears
My lids sink
And I begin to drift off to sleep

Eternal sleep.

A disappointed salesman of Coca Cola returns from his Middle East assignment.

A friend asked, "Why weren't you successful with the Arabs?"

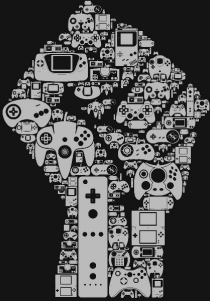
The salesman explained, "When I got posted in the Middle East, I was very confident that I will make a good sales pitch as Cola is virtually unknown there. But, I had a problem. I didn't know how to speak Arabic. So, I planned to convey the message through 3 posters.

First poster, a man crawling through the hot desert sand... Totally exhausted and panting. Second poster, the man is drinking our Cola and third, our man is now totally refreshed. Then these posters were pasted all over the place"

"That should have worked," said the friend.

The salesman replied, Well, not only did I not speak Arabic, I also didn't realise that Arabs read from Right to Left..."





WE HAVE TO CHOOSE

HASAN ABBAS

3RD YEAR

LUMS

There are always doubts. There are always questions. Why did we start this war? Who was responsible for that genocide? When will we stand up for our rights? Why did we not save that life instead of making it a headline for the evening news? Where is our morality? Where do we stand now within the cusps of humanity?

What is it to be human after all?

It is easy to forget what little good we have done in life and it's harder to remember why we have done it. It is easy to lose ourselves in this rat race where we contend, compete, criticize and critique. Positivity and optimism have given way to skepticism and anarchy more than anything.

We have chosen this path. Just like how we had chosen to go to the moon or explore the depths of the universe. Sadly, we have decided to add breadth but not depth to our findings. "Why" does not have an actual answer because somewhere along the lines you cannot comprehend the answers in your mind.

We have been taught to yearn for "The Dream" but what is it? Security, money, comforts? But for far too long we have dreamed about the end product without actually thinking about the path leading to it. Comrades! It is a hard path but it is not an impossible one.

Alas, we are too used to luxuries and comforts to actually stay fixated over a goal, to show strength and drive. But we do not have that

strength anymore. We want the easy way out, so to say. The shortcuts in life. But is life really that easy?

Was Erdos looking for a shortcut when he spent his entire life solving math innuendos? Did Curie poison herself with radioactivity after years of secluded work in vain? Did Mandela spend his time in jail for the sake of the Apartheid so he could be safe? Did Jinnah spend sleepless nights so he could enjoy comforts of already belonging to a comfortable background?

Again more questions but this time there are answers. They chose something as their goal. Setting a goal means getting challenged. Being driven means getting hurt and pushed beyond your limits. There was never a shortcut for success. This is a hard path but it's a path made of principles. Patience remains a virtue and you must move forward knowing it will require all you can give.

As a Chinese proverb goes, "The will is lower and spirits feel more defeated just when you are about to succeed". Right now, we have challenges in our lives. Why live a mechanized life? Why live in fear of the unknown when we can go out to explore it?

Be the Curies, Jinnahs, Mandelas and Erdos' of our generation. Be disciplined and march ahead. Create a motive which will make YOU proud one day and be the reason for change..

Don't sit at home "liking" pages on Facebook or Tweet about them...have some courage to step out of your comfort zone and face your problems head on; you owe your conscience that. Do not become the mechanized robot. Do not become another cog in the well oiled machine... there are many lifeless beings there already; their souls sucked out of them... their lives meaningless.

Maybe this is meaningless but for me it is not.

Flying was a dream once meaningless . . . now it is not. Reaching the moon was a dream once meaningless . . . now it is not. Freedom was a dream once meaningless in this region . . . now it is not. Dare to dream. It's the only challenge you have for your generation.

You do have a choice.

when you
CHOOSE
joy
You feel good
& when you feel
good, YOU do good
& when YOU do good
it Reminds others
of what joy feels like
& it just
might inspire
them to do
the same.

7 SIMPLE TIPS TO RECHARGE YOUR BRAIN

Contributed by Anam Irfan
Class of 2014, Shifa College of Medicine

Eat Light at Night	- A heavy meal at night causes tossing and turning and prolonged emotional stress while asleep. - Eating a light meal with some fruits allows us to sleep well, promoting brain power.
Control your Temper	The Prophet (PBUH) was present when a man became angry to the point that his jugular vein was swelled. He told this man, "I know a word the saying of which relaxes he who says it, Seek refuge in Allah (SWT) from Shaitan." (Bukhari)
Exercise your Brain	- Mental exercise is as essential as physical exercise. - Engage in activities that require your mind to be active like learning a new skill or language, interacting with others, starting a new hobby and playing scrabble.
Fast for a Day	It is mentioned in a Hadith that when you open your fast, it is preferable to open it with dry dates because there is a lot of blessing in this. If you do not have dates, open your fast with water because water is a great purifier.
Enjoy Simple Pleasures	- Stress drains our brainpower and memory resources. - Make a habit to engage yourself in few simple pleasures everyday like playing with your children- one of the Sunnah of the Prophet (PBUH).
Do Yoga or Meditate	- Yoga and meditation help to relieve stress. With less stress blood pressure is lowered, respiration and metabolism slowed and muscles are relaxed. - All of these factors contribute significantly towards an increase in our brainpower.
Develop your Imagination	- Greeks mastered the principle of imagination and association to memorize everything. - If you involve all your senses, touching, feeling, smelling, hearing and seeing in the imagination process, you can remember greater details of the event.



From APES or from the HEAVENS

With what mindset should humans live in this world? The reason people need to address this question is because without defining a mindset, it becomes very difficult to choose what to do when life throws a barrage of options at you. How can a person adapt to so many complex and mutually exclusive life scenarios, and at each turn remain confident that the decision he made is a good one.

The intent of writing this article is not to present a totalitarian formula mindset which the readers are bound to stick to after they've read this. But instead, it is what I personally feel and would like to live by. A mindset, derived in my own capacity, from the Quran and Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW).

It is predictable that any discussion on human beings would first require another look into human creation. Logically, origin and creation should be the first chapter of any book which has to deal with human behavior. If you look up bestsellers on human behavior, you'll see books like "Predictably Irrational" by Dan Ariely, "The Naked Ape" by Desmond Morris, "The Dying Animal" by Phillip Roth. In all these books, the origins of human behavior are implied to be in accordance with Darwinism; a theory which underlies all research and studies explaining why humans do what they do. It looks at humans beings as reformed animals, and that their origins are in fact completely animalistic.

However, as a Muslim it becomes very difficult to live life. If you are constantly made to believe that what you are doing is only specialized

animal behavior, the concept of worshipping and obeying a Higher being, becomes meaningless because then what do animals owe to any higher being?

That is why explaining everything which humans can potentially do in the light of the Quran and Sunnah, immediately puts everything into perspective. The miracle of the Quran can provide satisfactory explanations behind the reasons for all kinds of human actions; good, neutral and bad. And hence, this results in an understanding; why it is innate for humans to worship Allah (SWT) and why morality is universal.

Allah mentions in the Quran,

And [mention, O Muhammad] when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." (Al Baqara, 30)

Here, in this second chapter of the Quran, we get the initial instance of human creation. And please try to understand the magnanimity of this situation. This ayat defines that Allah SWT, the God of the Worlds, Himself decided to create Humans.

It shows that the blueprints for the creation of human beings are directly attributed to God himself!

It also shows that the ingredients which Allah decided to use to make the human form, inher-



ently had a bad reputation amongst the angels. Angels seemed worried knowing that anything created from earth would cause corruption and shed blood.

At another instance, Allah mentions in the Quran,

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "I will create a human being out of clay from an altered black mud. And when I have proportioned him and breathed into him of My soul, then fall down to him in prostration. (Al Hijr, 28-9)

In this instance, we learn additional information that human beings were formed in two phases. The first phase was the creation of a body and the second was the placement of a Divine spark inside of it. And it is precisely this particular Divine spark, the "Rooh" that makes the whole deal so special.

Just as the angels extrapolated the actions which something made out of clay and altered black mud can do i.e. corruption and bloodshed, perhaps we can also extrapolate the kind of behavior which a Rooh would like to exhibit, knowing its origins are from Allah the Exalted himself. The Rooh is a grand thing, it would want to be a king, it would want to have authority to do whatever it wants, it would love freedom, and it would love attention and praise. It would loathe being dependent on something, and would strive to be self sufficient.

Do you see where all this is going? The Rooh, wants to recreate for itself an entity similar to where it came from; an all powerful, self-sufficient, praiseworthy entity.

This combination of two immensely forceful ingredients, the Earth and the Rooh, within one form would be undeniably unsustainable if some equally dense rules were not immediately put into place.

If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the

people that perhaps they will give thought. (Al Hasbr, 21)

The Quran is in fact the dense word of Allah SWT which can help sustain all that which can arise inside a human being.

Thinking about it, we realize that Allah SWT has not equipped human beings with any paranormal physical abilities. But still such big rules and punishments are put into place. The reason is that despite the fragile structure of the body, once a human puts his mind to something, the driving force of the Rooh combines itself with the Material form, and using them both, the human accomplishes astounding feats. The potential is infinite!

But...

Allah says,

We have certainly created man in the best of stature; Then We return him to the lowest of the low, Except for those who believe and do righteous deeds, for they will have a reward uninterrupted. (At Tin, 4-6)

How is it that despite the best of stature, and such limitless potential, humans by default still reach the lowest of the low, lower than animals, lower than the devils, lower than worthless ash? Why is it not enough to just be human, and why do we have to believe and do righteous deeds to utilize that potential?

The answer can again be found in the Quran. So far we've been discussing the origins of human beings, singled out from the rest of the creation. But the truth is, Allah SWT also created the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon and life and death. These are the stage on which the human being is supposed to function.

[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving. (Al Mulk, 2)

Here we learn that the life of a human being, despite his great potential, is a test. And obviously, a test is not the permanent domain of



an entity. We are to realize that something is tested after its creation for use in the future. The nature of the trial is that it is designed to make you forget your origins. "...And what is the life of this world except the enjoyment of delusion." (Aal e Imran, 185). And it is in this trial phase that we need to remember our origins the most.

Who, when disaster strikes them, say, "Indeed we belong to Allah and indeed to Him we will return." (Al Baqarah, 156)

So far we have learnt that the Rooh inside of the human form is from Allah SWT himself. And so it reminisces its past status, and may wish to return to where it formerly came from. If during the course of the trial in this world, a human starts to think of himself as god due to the grand feelings which a Rooh would allow him to feel, that human would have indulged in the one greatest unforgivable sin. Firstly, logically if everyone was allowed to believe they were god, there would be discord between people. Secondly, how would Allah, the Pure and Magnificent One, feel if an intimate creation of His, the Rooh, drenched in a corruptible and crude material form claimed to take credit for what He Alone deserves.

It is not just the risk of Shirk which humans are in danger of when we are sandwiched between Rooh and flesh. The flesh itself also contains some inherent attributes which can greatly hamper our purpose of being in this world.

Narated By 'Ubada bin As-Samit: Who took part in the battle of Badr and was a Naqib (a person heading a group of six persons), on the night of Al-'Aqaba pledge: Allah's Apostle said while a group of his companions were around him, "Swear allegiance to me for:

1. *Not to join anything in worship along with Allah.*
2. *Not to steal.*
3. *Not to commit illegal sexual intercourse.*
4. *Not to kill your children.*
5. *Not to accuse an innocent person (to spread such an accusation among people).*
6. *Not to be disobedient (when ordered) to do good deeds."*

(Sahib Bukhari, Volumn 001, Book 002, Hadith Number 017)

Analyzing the above Hadith, we notice that prohibition of shirk is the first rule. Shirk within ourselves, or if someone becomes too awe-inspired by the rooh within someone else,

or if someone becomes too awe-inspired by a material being itself; these are all varying degrees of shirk, but all are prohibited equally clearly.

The other rules indicate a more material origin. The risks posed to humans by the desires of the flesh. The needs of the flesh also limit the Rooh

from fulfilling its purpose. The Rooh just wants to get back to where it came from. Obviously, if we believe it is from Allah Himself, then how can the Rooh ever be content in the temporary, finite, material world? The problem of compatibility between the Rooh and Flesh can be highlighted in the fact that the Rooh is ever living, but the flesh will die. This survivalist 'lifestyle' is new for the Rooh, which is normally used to living in union with the Self Sufficient, Ever Living Allah SWT. This dependency on the body, if kept undisciplined, would result in the other points written in the Hadith; theft, murder and disobedience.

With these concepts, my personal mindset is

"...the only way to pass this trial successfully is to follow the path of the one person who was given the honor to go back to Allah SWT during his life in this world (i.e. on Mairaj)...it was a moment in which the longing of the Rooh was so great that that the Lord of the Worlds Himself arranged for the ascension."



that the only way to pass this trial successfully is to follow the path of the one person who was given the honor to go back to Allah SWT during his life in this world. I am talking about the 'Mairaj' of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW). It was a moment in which the longing of the Rooh was so great that that the Lord of the Worlds Himself arranged for the ascension.

The Islamic way of life comprehensively encompasses these aspects of human behavior. Allah has made the body, and the Rooh, and has given us a complete religion; how to earn a livelihood in a way that all humans can get an equal chance, how to feed ourselves and others so that no one is despondent, how to marry and raise a family so that sexual desires do not hinder the flight of the Rooh. Islam presented a methodology of worship so that all the numerous Roohs of humans can stand together in order, without feeling superior or inferior, or desirous of authority and praise, because they all can see their origin. A true level of devotion is expected to enable the Rooh to see Allah SWT.

Narated By Abu Huraira : One day while the Prophet was sitting in the company of some people, (The angel) Gabriel came

and asked, ... "What is Ihsan (perfection)?" Allah's Apostle replied, "To worship Allah as if you see Him, and if you cannot achieve this state of devotion then you must consider that He is looking at you." (Sahih Bukhari, Volumn 001, Book 002, Hadith Number 047)

In conclusion, I'd like to say that our view of this world should not be a darwinistic "bottom to top" view of ourselves in which we reduce human beings to a fully material being without any higher connection. We must have the "top to bottom" understanding of our own creation: that the idea originated in Allah's knowledge, and the form created from matter. But the complete human was formed only after the finishing touch, the Rooh, was breathed into it. Every decision of our lives should be aimed at bringing ourselves, our Muslim brotherhood, and our human civilization closer to achieving the purpose; the purpose of following the path which would lead us back to the top.

You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah. If only the People of the Scripture had believed, it would have been better for them. Among them are believers, but most of them are defiantly disobedient. (Al Imran, 110)

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**Quotable
Quotes**

Pleasant behavior of a person towards his/her colleagues and regard for rules is a major component of a person's work and social life. To achieve success is not just to be outstanding at the work you do but also to appreciate and show respect towards what others do. A person's conduct always reflects his/her personality. The conduct should compliment one's work, otherwise bad conduct tends to overshadow the achievements accomplished.

Narrated 'Abdullah bin 'Amr: The Prophet never used bad language, neither a 'Fahish nor a Mutafahish. He used to say 'The best amongst you are those who have the best manners and character.' (Sahih Bukhari, Virtues and Merits of the Prophet (PBUH) and his Companions, Volume 4, Book 56, Number 759)





Transcend

SHIZA CHAUDRY

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Prelude: Following is a conversation between two angels, one of whom decides to take the other on a journey back in time to witness the Prophet (SAW) and his four most beloved companions (RA).

"O my brother, my fellow Angel
Wouldn't it please you to embark on a journey?
To distant lands, to distant scrolls of Time
Home to men of clay so pure
That put to shame you and me.

So spread your wings, breathe deeply
To Allah's beloveds is our destination
Listen. The sands of Arabia are calling our names
Much to learn there is, much for you and me.

Ah, what do you say my brother?
Who's the man with that blessed walk, that blessed smile?
That *nur* surrounding him, how it blinds our eyes!
Oh, how he quivers and trembles in *sujud* all night
You wish to ease his pain, we all do.
But he wishes only the salvation of his Ummati.
That man who yearns to hear Bilal's voice
Hayya alas Salah, because prayer has been made
A coolness for his eyes.

Do you see how they pelt him with stones?
Heartless, sick to the core they must be!
It's our leader descending, that's Jibreel.
How our hearts ache as Allah's beloved speaks:
"O Lord of the weak and my Lord too,
Into whose hands have you entrusted me?"
I see it makes you weep so violently
But do keep listening.
A day will come when Taif will prostrate, Taif will kneel.
How beautiful is the dua of Allah's Nabi.
Didn't I tell you there was much to learn?
Much to learn for you and me.

"O Beloved of Allah, why are you drenched in grief?"



Please do stop weeping; heart-wrenching it is to see.
 Never understand will I, your love for your wife
 The first to believe, to whom you cried 'Zamilooni',
 O Messenger of Allah, what is this that I see?
 Your Lord! With you He wants to meet!
 Do you see how He wishes to erase your misery?
 Who better than Ar-Raoof, Ar-Raheem to give His beloved company
 Who better than the Nabi so dear, to be with Allah so near
 The heavens weep, for who can get enough of this love story?

Siddeeq! It's him who you see in the Cave of Hira
 Resting in his lap is the blessed face of Rasulullah
 He fights back the pain of the snakebite, so deep
 Wary that his beloved might stir from sleep.
 My fellow Angel, I wish Allah had too, taught me
 How to love someone so effortlessly
 For what wouldn't I give to be
 The one whose tears fell on the Prophet's cheek
 But chosen is Abu Bakr, second only to the Messengers
 Such are the men of clay, better than you
 Better than me.

Oh what's that I see in your eyes? Fear, maybe?
 My friend, don't be alarmed by that man's fury
 For he thinks, the Messenger he's about to kill
 But how beautiful is his Lord, how different a story He weaves.
 "Ta-ha," the man begins to read.
 Can't you sense the air is no longer heavy?
 His heart has melted, from chains of ignorance he's free.
 Beloved to Allah, beloved to His Nabi.
 Do you see how the devil runs away so hurriedly?
 Omar is taking this road, so why shouldn't he?

Here comes the Possessor of two lights!
 Modesty his garment, such a humbling sight
 For it's not only you, or me, or our brethren
 But the Prophet too, from Uthman, feels shy.
 My friend, my fellow Angel
 I would give it all up, this perfection of mine
 Oh let the tears burn my eyes, pain fill me inside
 Let swollen be my feet, standing in Qiyam all night
 Like Uthman, the entire Qur'an he recites
 In one rakah, can you believe it?
 For this untiring Angel can't believe his eyes.



Who's that young man, you ask me?
 Sore eyes, thin, feeble legs
 Why, it's Asadullah, ten year old Ali.
 Incredible is his desire to be with Allah's Nabi.
 See how they mock him, laugh so derisively
 Be patient O friend, not angered by their inanity.
 Little do they know, how little do they see.
 Badr, Uhud, Ahzab- All sing about his gallantry
 Go ahead and hide in Qumus, O Bani Israel
 Not even your strongest can stand against Ali.
 So dear to Allah is he
 That even His heaven desires that they meet.

What's the word that you search for?
 When the heart is overwhelmed, my friend.
 What's that feeling you yearn for?
 When your soul screams for you to be like them.
 What's that one wish, that one prayer you beg for?
 My fellow angel, my brother so pure
 If Allah had said even once, "Ya malaak, clay or nur?"
 He knows what my answer would've been for sure."

-- By a Naqis one.

Don't try to be too wise... :)

Two guys were lost in the Sahara desert. One was David, the other Michael. They were dying of hunger and thirst when they suddenly came upon an oasis, with what looked like a minaret and mosque in the middle.

David said to Michael: "Listen, let's pretend we are Muslims, otherwise we'll not get any food or drink. I am going to call myself Dawood". Michael refused to changed his name. He said, "My name is Michael, and I will not pretend to be something I am not!"

The Imam of the mosque received them both well. He asked about their names.
 David said, "My name is Dawood".
 Michael said, "My name is Michael".

The Imam turned to the helpers in the mosque and said, "Please bring some food and water for our guest Michael." He then turned to Dawood and said, "Salaam 'Alaikum brother Dawood. Ramadan Mubarak!"



KHUTBAAT

Touchstone of Faith

Brethren-in-Islam!

As I explained to you last Friday, men can go astray in three ways. One is to leave aside the law of Allah (SWT) and become slaves to corporal desires. The second is to give preference to family customs and the way of life of their forefathers over the law of Allah (SWT). The third is to ignore the system enunciated by Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) and follow the ways of fellow-beings who either are big personalities of their own nation or dominant nations of the world.

Real Definition of a Muslim

The real definition of a Muslim is that he should be immune from these three ailments. Only that person is called a Muslim who is a slave of none but Allah (SWT) and a follower

By SYED ABULALA MAUDUDI

CONTRIBUTED BY QURATULAIN HAIDER CHAUDRY

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in His Messenger (PBUH), not in you."

Signs of Hypocrisy

Servitude of 'Self'

If, contrary to this, a person says: "May this be the injunction of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH), my mind does not accept it because I consider it harmful. So I shall put aside the directions of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) and act according to my own opinion." Obviously, the heart of such a person is bereft of faith. He is not a Momin but a hypocrite because while he verbally asserts that he is a servant of Allah (SWT) and a follower of His Messenger (PBUH), in reality he is a slave of his own self and a follower of

Also declare: "Surely my Salah, my devotion, my life, and my death

are all for Allah the Rabb of the Worlds. He has no peer;

thus am I commanded and I am the first of the Muslims." (6: 162-3)

of none but His Messenger (PBUH). He alone is a Muslim who sincerely believes that the teaching of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) is the Absolute Truth, and that whatever goes against it is false, and that whatever is good for man in this world and the Hereafter is all contained in the teaching of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH). One who has complete faith in these verities will never bother if his mind felt uneasy about them, or his family members upbraided him, or the worldly type of people opposed him, because in each case he will clearly reply: "I am Allah (SWT)'s slave not yours; I have affirmed faith

his own opinion.

Adherence to Custom

Similarly, if a person says that regardless of the injunctions of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH), it cannot be possible to give up a certain custom practised from his forefathers' time or to discontinue a use which has been in vogue for long in his family and kith and kin. Such a person will be reckoned among the hypocrites too, though he might have grown a mark of any size on his forehead due to profuse prostration in endless prayers and might have made his face very religious-look-



ing. Deen does not consist of Ruku', Sajdah, Fasting and Hajj nor is it found in the face and dress of a man. In fact Deen means obedience to Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH). One who refuses to obey Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) in conducting his affairs, his heart is in reality devoid of Deen. His Salah, His Fasting, and his religious appearance are nothing but a fraud.

A Few Examples of Obedience to Allah (SWT)

Abstinence from Alcohol

You must have heard how widespread the drinking of alcohol was in Arabia. Men and women, young and old, all loved to drink. They sang songs in its praise and were totally addicted to it. You know this fact also that is difficult to give up drinking after getting addicted to it.

Yet, what happened when the prohibition order was given through the Qur'an? The very Arabs who loved alcohol more dearly than their lives broke its containers with their own hands. Alcohol flowed like rain-water in the streets of Madina. One group of people, with drinking vessels in their hands, heard the proclamation of the Prophet (PBUH) prohibiting alcohol; their hands suddenly stopped where they were. Those who had the cup close to their lips put it away before even a drop could enter their mouths. Others started retching to get the drink out of their systems. Such is the strength of true Iman. This is one of the finest examples of submission to Allah (SWT) and the Messenger (PBUH).

Severance of Familial Ties

You also know that in this world nobody is dearer to us than our relatives. Fathers, brothers and sons, particularly, are so dear that we are willing to sacrifice everything for them. But now think of the battles of Badr and Uhud and see who fought against whom. A father was in the Muslim army and the son amongst

the Kafireen; or the son was on this side and his father was on the other side. One brother was on this front and another brother on the other front. Close relatives confronted each other and fought as if they were strangers. And this spirit was not worked up for the sake of money or land, nor was it aroused by personal enmity, but they fought against their own flesh and blood simply because they had the grit to sacrifice their fathers, sons, brothers and their whole families for the sake of Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) alone.

Giving up Cultural Norms and Customs

You know, too, that Islam demolished practically all the ancient customs prevalent in Arabia. The greatest evil of all was idol-worship, which had been practiced for hundreds of years. Islam told people to give up this evil as well as alcohol, adultery, gambling, theft and armed robbery—all of which were rampant at that time. Indeed, no ancient custom was left untouched. But do you know in what manner did those who truly believed in Allah (SWT) and His Messenger (PBUH) submit to all this? They broke with their own hands all those idols which had been worshipped for centuries and at whose altars sacrifices had been offered. They renounced all those family customs which had been passed down from generation to generation.

The Way to Allah (SWT)'s Pleasure

Brothers! The Qur'an says: "Never shall you attain true piety unless you spend [in the way of God] out of what you love." [Aal e Imarn 3:92]. Herein lies the essence of Islam and Iman. The real grandeur of Islam lies in this very principle that you must be prepared to sacrifice for the sake of Allah (SWT), if necessary, whatever is dear to you.

In many affairs of your lives Allah (SWT)'s commandments beckon you towards one direction while your own self goads you towards another. On one side is Allah (SWT)'s pleasure



and pitted against it is a whole world of gratification. One who discards everything of this world and bows down to the commandment of Allah (SWT), has adopted the path of Islam. And one who sets aside Allah (SWT)'s commandment and fulfills the desires of his heart and the temptations of the world is the person who has taken the path of kufr or hypocrisy.

Muslims of Today

The condition of the people today is that they gladly accept whatever is convenient in Islam but whenever a real confrontation arises between Islam and Kufr, they are quick to change their direction. This is the attitude of even some so-called religious people today.

What they mean is that Islam is a beautiful toy, to be displayed on a shelf and to be praised from a distance, but to be strictly avoided if the question of enforcing its laws to govern ourselves, our families and relations and our businesses and the general conduct of our lives is raised. As a result, neither Prayer nor Fasting nor Reciting the Qur'an or outward adherence to the Shari'ah is effective. When the soul departs, what miracle can a soul-less body perform?



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THE FLEETING NATURE OF THIS WORLD

NAUMAN SHAHID KHAN

“And march forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Rubb, and for Jannah as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for the Al-Muttaqin (the pious).” (3:133)

As is evident from the above mentioned verse, our life in this Duniya is not very different from the life of a fire-loving insect. The human mind interprets this life through the recent marvels of science and the veil created by the rapid advances in medicine. As a result it forms the conclusion that humans should theoretically live longer on this planet than any other creation of Allah. In fact, this thinking paves the way to a huge misconception because in reality, life passes away so rapidly that none of us can get the time to perform every obligation and also fulfill our ever increasing desires at the same time. A fire-loving insect hardly lives for a day, and as soon as it sees fire, it hastens towards it because “seeking light” is its primary goal in life. Pondering upon this example would reveal that our goal is not so different. All of us are here in this temporary world to seek light in the form of knowledge. This knowledge is both religious as well as worldly, and the best Khalifa of Allah on the Earth is the one who can maintain a striking balance between both.

“And whatever you spend in good, surely Allah knows it well.” (2:273)

The best analogy to describe the fleet-



ing nature of this world is to compare it with an examination room. A student, for all his academic life, prepares for the ultimate goal-receiving a professional degree and becoming a master in his field. He has available to him all the tools necessary for achieving this goal, and therefore it is expected that he should utilize them fully in order to obtain a perfect score. The Day of Judgment and the Hereafter are not very different from this. Those who sincerely sought knowledge in this world, and utilized it to lead a life in the path of Allah (Islam) would be the happiest on the Day of Judgment. They would be welcomed by the Angels, and their reward would be the everlasting, magnificent life of Jannah. In contrast, the people who were foolish and spent all their time in obtaining worldly riches and pleasures would weep and regret their actions. They might have been the wealthiest people in this Dunya but their wealth would not even account to the weight of an atom in the eyes of Allah. Thus, they would be ridiculed and shoved to their eternal punishment- the torment of the Fire of Hell.

“So hasten towards all that is good.”
(2:148)

A true believer never wastes his time in the race to worldly fame, riches or wisdom. He only desires to be as close as possible to Allah and His perfect religion, Islam. The world as we know it has to end and only those who followed the right path would be granted salvation. Allah promises the Believers that He would surely grant them equal measure for all the good deeds that they performed in this Dunya.

“So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant)

shall see it.” (99:7)

Hadrat Anas (RA) related from the Holy Prophet (SAWW):

“Three follow a dead body: members of his family, his possessions and his deeds. Two of them return and one remains with him. His family and his possessions return, and his deeds remain with him.”
(Bukhari and Muslim)

It is clearly understood from the above Quranic verse and Hadith of the Holy Prophet (SAWW) that our good deeds in this world are given the utmost importance in the court of Allah, the Supreme Judge. The people who become proud and arrogant are destined to be ruined no matter how many sons they have to carry on their legacy. The story in the Holy Quran “The people of the Garden” in Surah Al-Kahf tells of the believers and disbelievers. The disbelievers thought that they would pluck the plentiful fruits of their garden and would give none to the poor. Allah, thus, sent a horrible Azaab on them that left their gardens blackened and burnt and they were reduced to forever regretting their arrogance.

Therefore, a person seeking to become a true “Momin” and succeed in this world and the Hereafter should always harbor the fear of Allah in his heart. He should face all problems with a firm faith and Trust in the power (Qudrat) of Allah over all things in the universe. Doing so would definitely lead him into the Eternal Garden.

“The (Hell) Fire is surrounded with all kinds of desires and passions, while Jannah is surrounded with adversities.”
(Bukhari and Muslim)



The religion that began by one man inviting a whole atheist community to worship one and only God, who is the Supreme Authority, had more difficulties in beginning the development of its key feature: a prayer place. The Followers were not only tortured physically, but also tormented mentally for following the path of righteousness- *Sirat-e-Mustaqeem*. But as promised, God provided them a way out by giving them the command for Hijrah towards a city where they would not only get to practice their religion in peace, but also a place where they

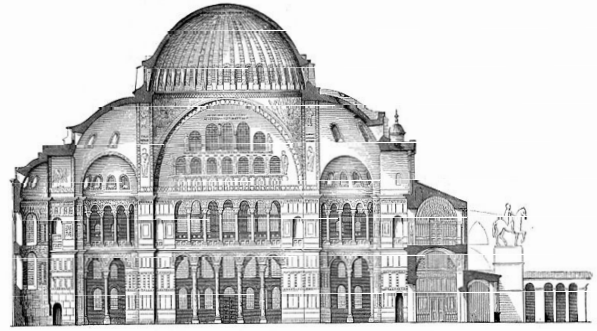


Fig 2: Hagia Sophia, dedicated to Christianity in 360CE, served the purpose it was built for, for over a thousand years, after which in 1453CE it was converted to a Mosque.

MOSQUES: A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

NEESAUN NAVEED

ALUMNI
COMSATS

would learn to prosper and thrive as a community; an Islamic community.

Here, in the city of Yasrib, or what later came to be known as Medinah Munnawarah, the Muslims learned about the sense of true belonging. Here, in the golden city of Ansaris, the Muslims built the thatch roofed simple square mosque that was destined to become a place of congregation for Muslims for the next fourteen hundred years. With humble origins, this mosque depicts a beautiful idea: from simplicity springs the origins of greatness...



Fig 1: This is how the Masjid-e-Nabwi could have looked when first constructed.

This mosque was built at the same time as the Christians were building huge, monumental churches, leaving a mark upon the world by construction architecture borrowed from the Greeks and Romans. Thus, as you can very well see for yourself, true Islamic architecture was nothing but simplistic depiction of function, rendering all the luxuries of life void, and giving importance to not wasting money on monumental structures. Every place had its own special way of building mosques. Initially everyone made simple structures congregation, prayer, discussions, studies and basically every other event in that society. For the first time in history, a place of worship actually became the hub of cultural activities.

However, as Islam spread through the world, the structure of the mosques began to evolve. From the mosque of Sammara, whose minaret fascinates critiques to this day; to the Sulemanye Mosque, whose excellent proportions define the meticulous study of Greek and Roman architecture, the Mosque architecture only developed towards excellence and maturity.

It is important to understand one thing when



Fig 3: The Sulemanye Mosque, built in Turkey is the perfect copy of the Hagia Sophia, whose study took the Muslims countless years to understand the proportions.



studying Mosque architecture. When the Muslims invaded a country, they borrowed the architectural style by converting the already constructed Churches and sometimes even temples into mosques for congregational prayers of all the newly converted and the invaders. Examples include the Hagia Sophia, one of the most beautiful and complicated works of architecture.

The mosque architecture can be divided widely into three categories:

- 1) Hypostyle
- 2) Central Dome
- 3) Iwan

Let's discuss their architecture one by one.

HYPOSTYLE MOSQUES

This is the style also known as the Arab Style, where the Mosques have a low covered sanctuary and a huge courtyard. The sanctuary roof would generally be flat or pitched and it's supported by many columns or arcades that are regularly spaced. This type of mosque is a very good place for social gatherings as well as religious seclusion needed by the people

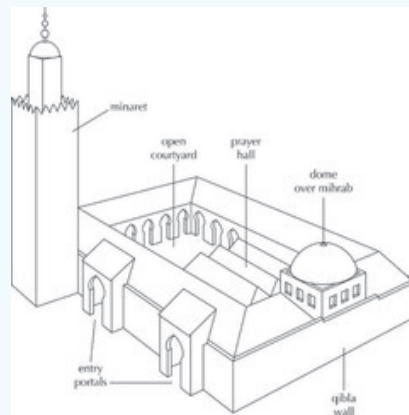


Fig 4: A typical hypostyle mosque

of community, as there can be numerous small rooms on the sides of the prayer hall. The best example is the mosque of Damascus, built in 706-15. It's one of the oldest mosques.

CENTRAL DOME MOSQUES

This is the type of mosque, where the central prayer hall is dominated by a huge dome. Since one dome cannot be constructed to fulfill the span required, so it is surrounded by smaller half domes to stabilize the structure. This was introduced by the Ottomans in the 15th century. It was a style of building heavily influenced by the Church architecture in Europe. This type of mosque, was built more for showing off the power of the Ottomans than to fulfill the true purpose of the mosque; its use as a community space. During that time, sadly, the kings forgot the humble teachings of Islam, and desired to make their name associated with a mosque greater in grandeur than the preceding king. No of minarets in a mosque began to depict the importance of the man who had the mosque built. Thus, building a mosque became more of an honor than a service to God.

IWAN MOSQUES

This is the type which evolved much later, and borrows from the intricate Iranian style of Architecture. The most beautiful mosques have been accredited to its unique and delicate style. An Iwan is generally defined as a vaulted space,

closed from three sides and open on the fourth. Examples of Iwan mosques can be found worldwide, especially in the central Asian region. Badshahi Mosque in Lahore is one of the best local examples. Other famous ones include the Shah Imam Mosque in Isfahan, Iran, a very exquisite site in itself.

All the above mentioned styles are those of the past lega-



Fig 5: Grozny Central Dome Mosque in Russia

cies, describing their way of life. Nowadays, the modern movement, art, architecture and everything else around the world has changed. From beliefs to actions, everything is questioned and distorted to fit one's own point of view. This has also changed the way the design of a mosque is conceived. Now it depends more on the concept and religious symbology than anything else. Every element in a mosque represents something. Every niche, every fountain has to mean something. When this point comes, people once again forget the real function a mosque needs to provide: a community place, where everyone gathers five times a day; not only to pray to the one and only Self Sustaining Being, but also to interact with everyone else from the community. Help those who need it, discuss problems, solve issues, get married, learn not only to recite Quran, but also how the world works; hence live a full community life in this one place that becomes the center. But we have turned the mosques into places we only go to for prayer, and that too very occasionally, not on a regular basis. They are just show pieces to us now, where if a non-Muslim enters, he is considered a sinner and thrown out. This is not how it all began. This is not how it should all end. THINK ABOUT IT.

Fig 6: The main entrance Iwan of the Shah mosque



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Expensive Scent

Scene 1

(In a town in Turkey)

Once a poor man was passing by the finest restaurant in town. He had not eaten all day. He stopped to smell the delicious food being cooked and served inside.

Poor Man: "Oh what a wonderful smell. If only I had some money I would go inside and eat a big meal." He took a few long sniffs of the food and sadly walked on.

Poor Man: "Qadr Allah wa mashyatihe (As Allah wishes)." As he was going, he heard someone shouting from the back.

Restaurant Owner: "You! Stop! Stop there. Come back."

Poor Man: "May be the restaurant owner has taken pity on me." Thinking to himself the poor man turns to the owner.

Poor Man: "Yes brother, what do you want?"

Restaurant Owner: "How dare you smell my food! You'll have to pay for those sniffs you took."

In a shocked tone:

Poor Man: "You can't be serious?"

Restaurant Owner: "I sure am. You inhaled the scent of my food; I want money for it."

Poor Man: "I'm sorry. I don't have any money to pay you."

Restaurant Owner: "Well in that case you can explain that to the Qadi."

Scene 2

(In court)

The Qadi listens to each man in turn.

Qadi: "Hmmm. This is a most unusual case. I'll need sometime to think it over. Come back tomorrow."

Both men head towards their places.

Scene 3

(At the poor man's house)

The poor man has a sleepless night.

Thinking to himself:

Poor Man: "What if the judge decides to fine me? I can't even pay a small amount, let alone what the restaurant owner may demand."

In the morning, he is awoken by the Fajr Azaan. He makes a dua after the prayer. As he is heading towards the court, he meets his neighbour Hodja.

Hodja: "Assalaamualaikum, my dear neighbour. What's the matter, you look quite down?"

The poor man proceeds to tell Hodja the whole story.

Hodja: "In that case let me go to court with you."

Scene 4

(At the court)

Qadi: "After thinking over the case, I have decided that you must pay what the restaurant owner is demanding."

The poor man shakes his head in disbelief.

Hodja: "Please sir, I am a neighbor of this man, can I pay on his behalf?"

Qadi: "Sure."

Hodja takes a bag of coins from his pocket and shakes them close to the restaurant owner's ears.

Hodja: "Did you hear that sound?"

Restaurant Owner: "Yes I did. Why?"

Hodja: "Well then, that is your payment. My neighbor smelt your food and now, you have heard the coins."



DESCRIBING the Indescribable

DR YOUSUF RAZA
PRESIDENT, MUSLIMS UNITED
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It felt surreal to say the least. As my heavenly carriage, which would put President Obama's entourage to shame, drove me through the majestic gates of paradise, I felt an indescribable sense of relief. I felt so light that the cool heavenly breeze may almost have blown me away. I looked around myself to a display of unparalleled majesty and beauty. Everything around me was extolling the perfection and flawlessness of my Master in a fresh serene tune. Thousands and thousands of angels arranged in rows and tiers with their wings spread out low, welcomed me with the salutations of "Salam". My relief coupled with shock did not allow me to fully appreciate the beauty of the angelic entourage. I still couldn't believe it; my Master had saved me from the punishment of eternal burning and despair! Me? He had overlooked my rebellions, my sins... and for the guidance that He Himself had given me, He forgave me. The Mercy!

As the angelic salutations penetrated my being the shock began to settle. My golden black carriage picked up pace and started levitating off the ground. The royal clip clop of my "horses" was replaced by a gentle flapping of their wings. Roughly termed in your dunya language they would be unicorns. But their beauty, majesty, speed, and compliance was beyond anything I'd ever read in my childhood storybooks. I jumped to the front of the carriage and sensing my desire the young driver handed me the reins, gave me a tight squeeze and said,

"Congratulations, you are truly blessed."

Before I could collect my tongue muscles to respond he had jumped off. I can thank him later, I said to myself; right now it is time to feel the speed of light... light of heaven!

"Woohoo..." My exhilarated screams echoed across the universe, bounced off the stars, reverberated back to my ears to multiply my joy. I knew exactly where to go; I knew the way better than I did for my house in dunya.

I saw my house, rather my palace, from afar... my jaw dropped. In my earnest to get home I tried getting off before the carriage had actually landed. I tripped and would've otherwise crashed onto the ground but the wind caressed me to the safety of my palace driveway...

My eyes were still not done taking in the majesty of my home but my feet started prancing towards the gigantic gates held welcomingly open. I walked in to the understanding that I owned everything my eyes were falling upon. It was the expansiveness of the heavens and the earth; exactly as I was promised. I cannot describe it all; I haven't yet seen it all. I can't describe what I have seen; your language is inadequate.

I entered to the serene sound of a harp coupled with the most beautiful singing I had ever heard. The sight of my jannah and the sound of her voice almost made me faint; but my new heavenly form was made not only to tolerate it but to experience it to the fullest. With a



heart fluttering with joy I slowly made my way forward.

The gate I had entered was on top of a mountain. As I walked on I saw the most amazing spectacle- the origin of my waterfall. It was water coming from up high... a higher heaven perhaps. I looked up but its origin was beyond my field of vision. Oh well... I did what I'd dreamed of doing in dunya: I dived in the waterfall! My waterfall; 30 times higher than Angel's fall and 50 times larger than the Niagara! And after the coolest and most refreshing water slide of my life I reached the bottom; undead, with all my bones intact!



The river plummeted with five others into my very own sea. From five different directions ran rivers of milk, honey, chocolate and wine, and the fifth carrying me; each entering in the form of a waterfall originating from their respective valleys.

** This piece is not a claim; it's a desire, a very heartfelt du'a that Allah makes this come true and makes this a means of encouragement for the writer and the readers to strive their utmost for the supremacy of His deen and most importantly to achieve what no eye has seen, no ear has heard,*

I swam like a dolphin to the very end. The river plummeted with five others into my very own sea. From five different directions ran rivers of milk, honey, chocolate and wine, and the fifth carrying me; each entering in the form of a waterfall originating from their respective valleys. Right over the sea I feasted my eyes to the most beautiful cloud cover I had ever seen. It was showering on to my sea exactly what I wanted for it to shower: hazelnuts!

I dove right in with my mouth wide open. I devoured my concoction to my heart's content. My taste buds had never been tingled thus.

Unlimited supply and being too full couldn't stop me; how many meals in dunya did I wish I wouldn't get full... How many meals where I wished there was more... Was it cake, chocolate bar, ice-cream, or brownie? It was a "little" bit of everything; a mile of this and a mile of that. And the desire had barely entered my mind that its fulfillment followed suit: every cell of body developed taste-sensation! You can well imagine the experience that followed... Oh no wait! You can never ever imagine what that felt like, at least not in dunya.

and no heart has ever imagined. And I ask Allah's refuge from hell, a very grave possibility, in which case this article would be a burden of regret.

*** We found entertainment in "The Magic Faraway Tree", "Wishing Chair", "Harry Potter" etc. accompanying the main characters through their imaginary lives, with our emotions attached to them; living these fantasies through them. That was a reflection of real desires within us; desires put there by Allah subhanahu wa ta'aala. And the presence of those desires bears witness to the presence of Heaven and Hell as well. Actual places where we will dwell forever. Struggle for jannah and hope for Allah's mercy then...*



ISLAM'S LEGACY TO THE WEST

MOHAMMAD HAMAYUN

This article is a sincere attempt to highlight the history of Islamic Science with particular reference to Islamic civilization and its contribution in the medieval period.

When we look at the history of science, it is simply impossible to ignore the contribution made by Islamic civilization for over a period of 800 years starting towards the end of 7th CE, to the development of modern science. It is only through honest assessment that one can understand Islamic Science, its true dimensions and the role, a pivotal one, it played in the development of science to its present level.

Readers must not forget that it was from the end of the 7th CE to the beginning of the 8th CE during the Ummeyyad's rule (at Damascus, Syria), in particular the period 705-715 CE, that Islamic Rule expanded to parts of India through Muslim governor of Makran, Muhammad bin Qasim. About the same time the whole of Central Asia was subjugated by Kotaiba. Asia Minor was jointly conquered by Masalamah, brother of Caliph Walid I and his son Abbas. It was the same short golden period that Hazrat Umar bin Abdul Aziz became the governor of Hijaz (706 CE).

In Africa (708 CE), the famous warrior Musa bin Nusair overthrew the Berber tribes, drove out the Greek conspirators and brought peace to the entire country. People were taught the principles of Islam and in a very short time the entire Berber nation was converted to Islam. The Byzantines harassed Muslim settlements from the Islands of the Mediterranean. Musa silenced them by capturing the cities held by them. Musa's viceroyalty thus extended from Egypt on the West to the Shores of Atlantic except Western Islands of Mediterranean.

Africa was now enjoying the blessings of toleration and justice under the Muslim Rule. The people of the neighboring peninsula of Spain were living in pathetic conditions. It was on the appeal of the Spaniards that Musa in response sent his enterprising lieutenant, the famous Tariq bin Ziad, to the Southern coast; he landed at a place now named after him Gabl-ul-Tariq (or Gibraltar) in 711 CE and marched to Toledo. Musa came from the East and, jointly with Tariq, captured in succession Aragon, Saragossa, Tarragona, Barcelona and other principle cities; in less than two years, the whole of Spain, up to Pyrenees was in the hands of the Muslims. Portugal was captured a few years later and named Al-Gharb as a separate province.

With the establishment of a large Islamic Empire, the Islamic civilization started to take its shape. During the Abbasside rule (at Baghdad, Iraq) starting from 749 CE, the first outside scientific contact was made in 770 CE during the reign of Al-Mansoor. The study and cultivation of humanitarian science is considered to be the best index to the nation's development.

Caliph Mamun's (813-833 CE) court was crowded with men of science and letters from different parts of the civilized world. The competent scholars translated a number of manuscripts of philosophical and scientific works from ancient Greek into Arabic language. Side by side considerable attention was

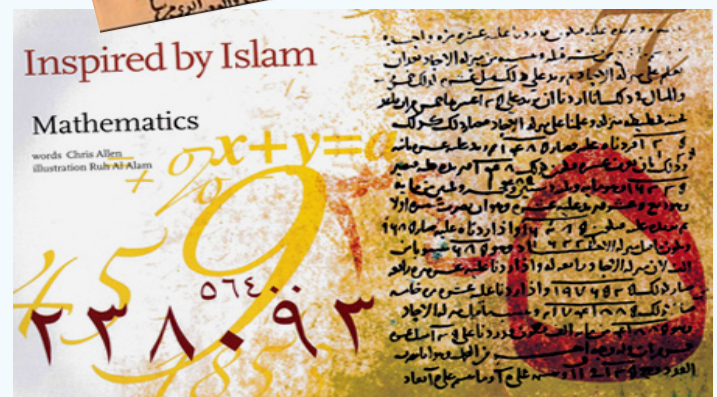
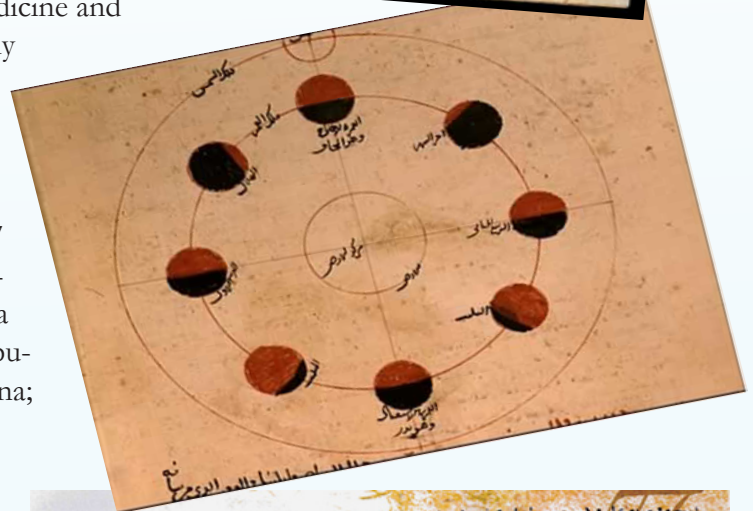


given to original research under qualified professors.

The subject of Mathematics got its beginning from Quran itself as Quran sets out complex series of rules for sharing out of the inheritances. The first great Muslim mathematician was **Al-Khwarizmi** (780-850 CE); he attempted to systemize, in Arabic, all scientific knowledge related to Geography, Math, Astronomy and Calendar Science. He was the first to use the Spanish word 'guarismo' meaning 'figure, digit and/or cipher'. He was also the first to use the English word 'algorithm' in his book titled "Al-Jamwa'l-Tafriq bi-Hisab al-Hind". He gave the rules to work with Arabic numerals and use of numerations by position. The Arabic word '*Sifr*', meaning 'empty space' later accounted for zero. The second field of Al-Khwarizmi was Algebra, one of his books was titled "Al-Kitab al-Mukhtasarfi hisab al-jabrwa'l muqabala". Here '*Jabr*' corresponds to 'transformation' and word '*Muqabala*' means 'reduction'.

After Al-Khwarizmi, we find three contemporary and highly exceptional Muslim scholars namely **Al-Razi** (865-925 CE) working in the fields of Chemistry, Medicine and Biology; **Al-Farabi** (872-950 CE) working mostly in Meta-Physics, Science, Ethics, Mysticism and Music; **Al-Battani** (850-929 CE), a great Muslim scholar in Astronomy who pointed out Ptolemy's errors concerning planetary motion. Al-Battani is followed by **Abu-al-Wafa** (940-997 CE); he introduced the theorem of tangents, defined secant and co-secant and also gave formula for addition of angles. As contemporaries of Abu-al-Wafa we find scholars like **Ibne-Sina** (Avicenna; 980-1037 CE) and **Al-Biruni** (973-1050 CE).

It is worth mentioning that in the field of Geometry, famous brothers commonly known as **Banu-Musa** (Sons of Musa bin Shakir) stand out. They flourished during Mamun's period and were responsible for introducing higher Mathematics to the west including (a) Theorem on area of triangle as a function of sides, and (b) Formula for the area and volume of the cone and sphere. Astronomy was their special subject; they ascertained the size of the Earth





and variations in the lunar latitudes.

Hassan bin Haisem also called Ibn al-Haithem (Al-Hazem in Europe) was born in Spain, resided in Egypt and is famous for his discovery of atmospheric refraction and a camera in optics. He gave the theorem of co-tangent to determine the azimuth of the Qibla. Azimuth is defined as the 'Arc of heavens extending from Zenith to the Horizon which it cuts at perpendicular angles'.

In the following few paragraphs, I shall try to mention some of the important achievements of individual Muslim scholars and their influence on the west.

Al-Razi defined the difference between smallpox and measles. He provided rational classification of the substances, descriptions of the instruments and methods employed in his experiments. He had excellent knowledge of Anatomy and recorded exact case history of patients. Al-Razi provided many writings on measles, smallpox and kidney in the form of a medical encyclopedia. These writings were later **translated from Arabic to Latin and other languages** and were quoted in Europe until 19th century. He created deep impressions on Al-Biruni.

Al-Biruni must be ranked perhaps as the greatest scholar of medieval Islam (lived during the reign of Mahmud Ghaznavi). He also wrote the biography of Al-Razi. Besides his scientific writing, his authority on linguistic problems is shown by his notes on language. There are a series of translation (into Arabic) of many languages of non-scientific writings. Besides his mathematical and astronomical writings, we find his great chorological book on **Ancient Nations**. It is the first work of its kind in the world of literature and an invaluable source for history of religions and folk fare. It is remarkable to see the description of the festivals and important days of various religions mentioned in the book.

Ibn-e-Sina (Avicenna)'s great philosophical work entitled 'al-Shifa' (the cure) embraces the totality of the sciences. Besides basic alchemy (or chemistry) his subjects included Medicine, Geology, and Meteorology. His writings include "Ophthalmology and Infection", present in the medical work entitled Canon. Pharmacology is an interlinking discipline between chemistry and medicine. No branch of Islamic Medicine has been so thoroughly investigated as pharmacology and some major achievements in medicine took place as early as the time of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Al-Harith is said to have received training in medicine during the time of the Prophet (PBUH). In the 12th century we find one **Al-Jawzi** who considered it his duty to quote traditions in praise of medicine in his book. Amongst the oldest Arabic encyclopedias of medicine is the "Firdaus al-hikma" and in some respects this work is unsurpassed. Its author **Ali bin Rabba-al-Tabari** wrote the encyclopedia in 850 CE. He discusses ophthalmology (study of eye and its diseases), and wrote a special chapter on Indian medicine and compared it with Greek medicine. His work has a special place in the **history of medicine** as it provides a model for medical school with historiograph of medicine. **Ibn Rushd** (Averroes) in 12th century in Spain is another great medical author. His well-known work "Kulliyat" was translated into Latin. Its chapter on "Respiration" is a subject of special interest.

It's worth mentioning that Medical Historical writings of Islam form a considerable part of Islam's legacy to the West and its impact has continued until the present day.

Al-Battani stands out among all Arab Muslim Astronomers. He wrote the well-known "Mumtahan" tables and made observations of such precision that he was able to demonstrate the existence of annular eclipses of the sun and, after **Ibne Yunus** in 10th century, added and computed more astronomical tables. Al-Battani



placed trigonometrical ratios on a new elegant basis by substituting Sine and Cosine for the old Greek use of chord and introduced tangent and cotangent also. He worked in timing of new moon, the length of the solar and sidereal year, the prediction of eclipses and phenomenon of parallax, which was a matter of fundamental concern. It would have been a **challenge to Ptolemy's ideas (earth at center)** and revolutionary change (sun at center) if the authority at that time had not stopped Al-Battani from doing so, who held the view that the study of path of earth and other planets suggested centrality of sun in a solar system in opposition to the prevalent opinion. Muslim astronomical tables and star maps were used for centuries in Europe and the Far East. The Muslim calendar being *lunar*, month's beginning thus is dependent on moon sighting. The Muslim astronomers were naturally interested in resolving this issue and a number of solutions were proposed. The one proposed by Al-Battani was finally implemented.

Umar Khayyam (1048-1123). He classified the Algebraic equations up to 3rd degree according to a number of terms and distribution of co-efficient being always positive and having roots. He resolved the cubic equations which could not be reduced to quadratics. It is worthy of note that in calendar science, the reformation of calendar at the instance of famous Seljuki Sultan Malik Shah (1037-1092 CE) was carried out by this mathematician astronomer correcting all errors by computation of time which surpassed Julian calendar and equaled in accuracy Gregorian Calendar. The new year day was fixed at the first point of sun's entry into Aries, which was earlier considered to be from the entry into Pisces.

The Arab scientists also worked on theory of numbers. The "Magic Square" is an example, as shown in the diagram. Sum whether read in column, rows or diagonals is constant, in this case 39.

20		18
12	17	10
11	13	15
16	19	14
8		6

Arab geometers like **Ibn-al-Haithem**, **Umar Khayyam**, **Al-Jawhari**, **Thabih bin-Qura**, **Tusi** and **Shams al-Din** at different times were all prominent in the field of geometry. Thabih collaborated with Banu Musa and worked on cubature's and quadrature's quite independent of Archimedes' work. Thabih's method can be considered as a glimpse of modern Integral Calculus. In his work on the "Quadrature of Parabola" he determined the area of the segment of parabola by the method of integral sums and applied the division of the segments of integration in unequal parts forming an arithmetic progression. The cubature of the parabola case was completed later by **Ibrahim** and **Al-Kuli** in the 10th century.

While concluding, I hope all facts available in the history of science in Islamic civilization have been narrated. It has been demonstrated and established that the Arabic Language provided the possibility of an exact expression. The central position of Arabic as a language of Islamic religion and administration eventually led to its adaptation for scientific requirements. Its success as a scientific language has been proven by the fact that books of many Islamic authors were translated into Hebrew and Latin without significant changes, thus demonstrating the internationality of Islamic sciences.



Pre-Modern Civilisation

In the pre-dawn era of so called modern civilisation, men of society at large played an active role in helping boys mature into men. Most work was generally 'out in the field', away from home. Once a young boy in the household attained suitable age, usually before 10, he would often accompany his father to work. The boy would spend much time with his father and amongst other men of the community. Through the natural process of osmosis, this actively instilled into the boy, values of what it means to be a man, namely, a protector and a provider.

The work was often physically demanding, involving team work, people skills and self-reliance. By taking part in this at an early age, young boys began maturing early and learning quickly about their role in the society from a very early age. In some cultures, the maturing process was helped even further through what may be referred to as a "male initiation" process.

As soon as a boy would show signs of puberty, he would be thrust into a ritual that would force him to face his own mortality. The rituals varied from culture to culture; in some cases the boy was doused in an army of insects that would cover him from head to toe. If he did not rid himself of the insects, he would be dead within a few hours or a day at best. The insects would be many and ferocious.

In other cultures, the boy would be cast off into the jungle for a day or a night and would not be accepted back amongst men until he returned with the head or carcass of an animal. This particular ritual has been depicted well in the movie "300". In any case, the boy either failed in his attempt and died as a boy, or overcame the challenge of facing his mortality and transforming into a man.

After 'becoming a man', the boy would be aided by the community in seeking and wedding a

spouse. He would then be cultured further by the elder men of society, again by osmosis, in taking care of his wife and dependents. The whole process of becoming into a man would be started and completed often before the boy reached 16 years of age.

As structures of society became larger and moved up from localised clusters of tribes and groups of people, much of the male initiation processes took place during war. The young men were often en-

listed in the state army through some sort of mandatory conscription process and spent time undergoing militarization, often before hitting 20, and then returned ready to look for a spouse. This process was often completed before the boy reached his full adult height (between 18-21 years old).

All in all, the structure of society played an active role in the formation of boys into men, and in these pre-dawn civilisations, we find all the necessary components installed in society to actively aid this process.

The Components

Allah (SWT) through his Messenger (SAW) showed us how to install these vital components into society to make it a healthy one. From the Seerah we learn the active components, and how Rasoolullah (SAW) installed them.

ON

B E I N G

A

MAN

IBN JAVED



Male Initiation: After a young boy had received love and nurturing from his mother or a nurse up to the age of 7, his father took responsibility of teaching him about courage, fighting, skill, toughness and generosity. Wrestling, horse-riding and combat were mandatory requirements of Arab manhood, to name just a few.

Exhilaration: The physically demanding work and war quenched the thirst of exhilaration for the men. From the Seerah we learn that the men engaged in many battles, and of course most of their work and trade was out in the field, fulfilling their need for physical exhilaration.

“When I am in the battlefield, I love it more than when I am in my house.” [Khalid Bin Waleed comments on the exhilaration of war]

Social Skills: Working with other men taught the boys social skills, team work and raised their general emotional maturity by making them a heavily integrated part of society in the very early parts of their lives.

From the Seerah we learn that many of the Sahabah shadowed Rasool (SAW) on his expeditions to learn from him about Islamic character; part of this involved the refinement of social skills in the men, running their own households and becoming part of a team. Many of the women from the believers sent their young boys to shadow their fathers, other Sahabah and ultimately Rasool (SAW).

Leadership & Management: Both the migration to Medina and the battles fought necessitated leadership and management of a huge number of people, often in extreme circumstances. This forced them to hone their leadership and management skills. As Islam spread we recall how the Sahabah would visit other walaayas, appoint governors and train them on leadership and management in their own districts and areas of governance.

Sexual Desires: Boys were given a healthy way

of fulfilling their sexual desires in a society that encouraged marriage at an early age and actively helped to ensure the stability of the marriage.

Self-Reliance: Being away from home for long periods of time, often travelling/working alone or in small groups, and engaging in high intense situations both on and off the battlefield necessitated a character of self-reliance. The boys and men were also taught about rizq and healthy ways of conquering their worldly fears.

“Once, Abdullah Ibn Umar set off on a journey. On the way he saw some people stopped in their tracks. When he inquired about the reason, he was told that there was a lion in the way and the people were afraid of it. Ibn Umar dismounted and went up to the lion. He caught the lion’s ear, twisted it, slapped it on its neck and pushed it away from the path.

“Then he said, ‘The Messenger of Allah (SAW) didn’t inform us incorrectly. I heard the Messenger of Allah (SAW) say, ‘Only that thing overpowers the son of Adam (man) which he feels afraid of. If he does not fear anything besides Allah, nothing will overpower him except Allah. Man is turned over to only that thing which he believes (with certainty) can bring him benefit or harm. If the son of Adam does not believe that benefit or harm can come to him from anyone other than Allah, Allah will never consign him to anything else.’” [“Al-Bidaya wa an-Nihaya,” by Imaam Ibn Katheer]

Emotional Maturity: The sum of the components above led to a whole that was greater than the sum of its parts, observed as a high degree of emotional maturity of men.

Today

Unfortunately, today we find that in all modern societies, bar one or two, these vital components for a healthy society that in turn plays an active part in the development of man’s emotional maturity, are missing.



While conscription was a mandatory requirement in many countries up till around 40 years ago, it is no longer present in many parts of the world except for a handful of countries, and of those, only one or two stipulate it as a mandatory requirement.

The male has been programmed to seek exhilaration and immerse himself in physical demands; this is the fitrat of man. As earning a living often no longer requires physical exertion for men, we see many boys and men seek an outlet through sports and high adrenaline console games. There's a reason why most high adrenaline sports and hobbies are dominated by men, such as boxing, motor racing, football and so on, not to forget the so called extreme sports such as skydiving, base jumping and parkour. For a long time in console games, the highest selling game was "Call of Duty", a game about war.

Changes in the workplace have resulted in a loss of children shadowing their fathers at work. Boys are no longer taught by the elder men of society nor are they heavily integrated; rather they are sectioned into schools to mix with other children of the same age, resulting in severe stunting of potential for high speed growth of social, team work and self-reliance skills.

Leadership and management does exist in many areas in the workplace; however, as a ratio only a very small percentage get to experience their value first hand. Further, these skills are honed for work projects that rarely face extreme conditions such as war or the mass migration of people, where leaders are directly responsible for the lives of a large number of people and where one false move could result in scores of fatalities.

While many western cultures enable an outlet for the fulfillment of sexual desires, it's not in line with huk'm shari and therefore not considered healthy. In other cultures where sexual desires are expected to be fulfilled through marriage, unfortunately many superficial demands

of society placed on young men, usually of a financial nature, limit their chances of an early marriage, and we find many men not marrying until they have reached 30 to 35 years of age.

Many boys often go to university away from home both for the purposes of education and self-reliance i.e. learning to be independent. While this carries some value, again unfortunately it does not force them to contend with their mortality, and so while they learn self-reliance, it's not of the same degree as in the previous civilisation eras where they would often experience extreme conditions such as having to hunt for food and sustenance, encountering wild animals or facing the elements of harsh weather.

Potentially, the worst impact on the crippling of emotional maturity of men can be related to the absenteeism of fathers in the West. The promiscuous societies and the destabilisation of an institution that was once considered sacred, i.e. marriage, has led to many boys being raised without fathers. This detracts from male bonding time and severely affects the emotional growth of the boy.

The much needed constructs in society that are not present today leave us with men that fight with depression due to lack of exhilaration and experience higher degrees of stress due to their own perceived inability to cope as a result of not enough conditioning in self-reliance. Immoral and lewd behaviour is ever present and all in all emotional maturity starts to come around the age of 30.

"Real men are as rare as a reliable strong camel that can endure the burden of long trips; you can hardly find one in a hundred" (Bukhaari)



THE LAST DAY ON EARTH



Do you have a good imagination? Yes? Then try imagining this. Imagine a day, a quiet, peaceful, normal day, just like any other day. Suddenly a loud deafening sound is heard by everyone across the planet; as if a huge trumpet has been blown! The earth begins to rattle and shake fiercely and all things living find themselves dead. Then there is complete silence. Not a word. Not even a whisper.

BOOM! Another loud sound is then heard and slowly people begin to rise from their graves. When we look towards the sky we find it red and torn apart. Stars come crashing down and the sun is not where it used to be. When we look towards the earth, we see mountains floating about as if they are weightless; seas turning violent, gushing forth and overflowing. Wild animals that were once predator and prey, on that day are herding together in groups; while human beings are running away from one another. A father running away from his son, a husband from his wife, a brother from his brother and a mother leaves her infant behind. Can you imagine what would cause people to behave this way? What would be scaring people so much? Their hearts would be beating out of their chests and their eyes lowered in fear and humiliation. Everyone will only be worried about themselves and themselves alone.



Today, right this very minute, people are stressed about their jobs or businesses, some are worried about homework or school exams, some are planning weddings and yet others are planning vacations to their favourite holiday spots. But on that day, all these thoughts and worries will disappear and the only thought that will be on the minds of everyone will be the question: What will become of me? Will I be sent to live forever in paradise or will my final resting place be the fires of hell?

“Then, for him who transgressed all bounds (in disobedience to Allaah). And preferred the life of this world; verily, his abode will be Hell-fire. But as for him who feared standing before his Lord, and restrained himself from impure evil desires, and lusts. Verily, Paradise will be his abode.” [an-Naziat 79:37-41]

Very clearly, people will remember each and every thing that they did in their lives; whether it was good or bad, big or small. They will remember all the times when they obeyed Allaah and those times when they did not. Many will feel great regret that day, thinking, I wish I had done more to please my Lord. I wish I had not been in the company of those who took me away from the path of Allaah. I wish... I wish... I wish...

As strange as it may sound, this is not fantasy. This is not a fairytale or a horror story. This is a

day that is sure to come. A day that has already been planned. A day that is without a doubt, a reality. No one can escape it. No one can ask for timeout. No one can be absent on that day. A day witnessed by all.

The question for us to think about is: what have we prepared for that day? Allaah asks us in the Qur'an:

“O man! What has made you careless about your Lord, the Most Generous?” [al-Infitar 82:6]

This is Allaah's beautiful way of asking us why we have become so obsessed with this worldly life and have forgotten all about Him. Isn't it time now that we turn our attention towards our Lord and Master? The One who created us and gave us everything that we have in this world? Wouldn't it be better to live our lives according to what He has commanded us to do rather than to do whatever it is that we ourselves desire?

Those from among us who choose to become good Muslims and remain obedient to Allaah; surely Allaah will give them peace in this life and a huge reward in the next. A reward so grand that it can not even be imagined, no matter how hard we try! And finally, on the day when all others would be scared and worried, the true believers would be smiling happily, under the complete protection and mercy of Allaah, the Most High!

PONDER THIS

Imagine the time of Nuh (AS), when he was asked by Allah to prepare for the flood and build for himself & the believers an Ark.

Now imagine how much mockery and ridicule he would have faced at the hands of the people, knowing that he was building a massive ship on dry land, with water nowhere in sight.

Today, a similar abuse is faced by the believers as they diligently prepare for the Day of Judgement, when clearly, the Day of Judgement is nowhere in sight.

Question is, who gets the last laugh?

“So on this Day (of Judgement), the Believers will laugh at the Unbelievers...” [Qur'an 83:34]

- Raja Zia ul Haq

Petrichor

Pleasant smell of earth that accompanies the first rain after a long period of dry weather

AYESHA KHATTAK

A young man, in Makkah, overcome by extreme hunger went out in pursuit of food. But finding food, for him, was like looking for a needle in a haystack. Nevertheless, he kept looking and stumbled upon a silk pouch lying around. He picked it up and looked for its owner but the road was deserted. So he took it home. When he opened it, he found a stunning and rare pearl necklace within. Keeping it at his place he stepped out in search for food again.

On his way he heard an old noble man calling out aloud to take hold of public's attention, announcing 500 gold dirhams reward for whoever finds and returns a silk pouch. The young man took this person to his place. There he asked him to describe the content of the pouch. The old man accurately described the necklace and the pouch was returned. On this, the young man was offered the 500 gold dinars. But he refused, even on insistence, due to his consciousness of Allaah and as he sought reward from no one but Him. For the Pleasure of Allaah alone, he turned down a tempting and easy opportunity.

It was the hajj season, so the old man after thanking him left back for his town.

The young man later left Makkah too, on a ship towards Qurtaba (Cordova), the capital city of Haspaniyah (presently known as Spain), seeking better means of sustenance. But, during the voyage, the ship got struck by a powerful storm. The ship was wrecked, almost everyone aboard drowned and all the merchandise sank. This young man survived, as he clung resiliently to

a piece of the ship. Despite being beleaguered with perpetual difficulties, and on an empty stomach, he did not let go. The strong waves drifted him away, right and left. Until, finally, the waves led him to an island.

On the shore the inhabitants' assemblage rescued him. After he recovered from his ordeal, he asked for and visited the masjid on that island. There he saw an old and slightly torn mus'haf (Quraan) which could still be read. He started reciting it aloud. The people, after witnessing him read, approached him asking him to teach them too – as most were illiterate. So he taught them how to read and write Quraan, and much good came to him from that.

His endearing character won him the people's admiration and they expressed their wish that he stayed with them.

They offered a young orphan girl's hand to him in marriage and convinced him to accept the proposal. The girl was pious and had inherited much wealth.

As she was brought by her guardians for them to see each other on the day of marriage, the necklace she was wearing caught his eyes. Taken aback with the resemblance of this stunning pearl necklace with the one he had recovered years ago, he stared at it for long. The attention paid by the young man to the necklace did not go unnoticed. One of the girl's guardian could not hold himself and commented: *"You are breaking the heart of this young orphan, for instead of*

looking at her, you are looking at her necklace.” The young man narrated to them the story of his experience with a similar looking necklace. As he finished, the people arose praising Allaah and then told him the old man was the girl’s deceased father who had praised the young man, narrating this same story.

The marriage went very well; they had a few children too. But the girl succumbed to an illness and the young man and his sons inherited the necklace. After a while, one by one the sons departed too. Finally, as Allaah had willed, he became the sole owner of the necklace which he sold for 1000 gold dinars.

As time passed, he became a well-known judge. Whenever anyone required charity or funding, he would recompense without hesitation. People would ask him: *“How are you able to pay others often? From where do you get the money?”* He would say: *“It’s from the proceeds of the necklace”*.

This was the story of Abu Bakr Muhammad bin ‘Abdul-Baqi Al Bazzaz Al-Ansari (may Allaah have mercy on him) ^[1], which entails a sea of lessons:

- Fear of Allaah
- Gratitude
- Trust in Allaah
- Hope and expectations only from Allaah
- Use of common sense
- Kindness
- Humility
- Generosity

But there are also two utterly thought-provoking teachings that this story sheds light on:

1. Every result is based on an action or omission. There’s a force that drives a person towards certain actions (good or bad) and a force that restrains a person from certain actions (good or bad). In order to ensure that the action or omission leads to a good

result, the ‘driving force’ or the ‘restraining force’ itself needs to be based on something good as well.

Verily, Al-wala’ wa’l-bara’ is the answer! Love and hate for the sake of Allaah ‘Azza wa Jall (most Mighty and Exalted).

No doubt it is this condition of **al-wala’ wa’l-bara’**, that is the key yardstick towards constant motivation and implementation of the actions and intentions that can save us from the wrath of Jahannum, the wrath of qabr, the trials of life and death, and the trials of ad-Dajjal.

“Whoever loves for the sake of Allaah, **hates for the sake of Allaah**, gives for the sake of Allaah, and withholds for the sake of Allaah has perfected the faith.” ^[2]

Al wala’ wa’l-bara’, indeed, is a prerequisite of the declaration of Faith (Tawheed; **there’s no god except Allaah**). Requiring us to befriend & support only for His sake, and declare rivalry & neglect only for His sake. Requiring us to love what He loves and hate what He hates.

No doubt it is the pure love for Allaah that can replace the love for the contents of this temporary world, dwelling in our hearts and molding in to various forms of diseases therein and beyond. But our need and thus love for worldly pleasures increases and decreases according to our decrease and increase in love for Allaah.

Success is synonymous to our hearts’ fulfillment and complete happiness. But that is not possible to achieve without striving towards what pleases Allaah. And striving towards what is dear to Him is not possible unless one abandons all that Displeases Him.

When the heart is able to **truly feel** being Watched over, by the One whose reward has no better substitute and whose wrath has no worse substitute, the mind achieves the state of perseverance. Perseverance embraces both stead-

Al-wala’ wa’l-bara’ is a prerequisite of the declaration of Faith...it is the pure love for Allaah that can replace the love for the contents of this temporary world

fastness and patience. Steadfastness in doing something despite difficulty or delay in achieving success, thus, continuing gracefully, at last leading to victory. While, patience here can be best described in the words of a scholar: **“To have patience means that one’s common sense and religious motives are stronger than one’s whims and desires.”** The human heart being the battlefield, within which whims and desires on the one hand and common sense and religious motivations on the other are at constant war!

“And seek help in patience and As-Salaah (the prayer) and truly, it is extremely heavy and hard except for Al-Khaashi‘oon [i.e. the true believers in Allaah — those who obey Allaah with full submission, fear much from His punishment, and believe in His Promise (Paradise) and in His Warnings (Hell)]” ^[3]

“How wonderful is the affair of the believer, for his affairs are all good, and this applies to no one but the believer. If something good happens to him, he is thankful for it and that is good for him. If something bad happens to him, he bears it with patience and that is good for him.” ^[4]

Now common sense and religious motivation proved victorious in the case of Abu Bakr Al Ansari because it was based on his **love for what Allaah loves and his hate for what Allaah hates**, thus establishing strong *taqwa* (consciousness & fear of Allaah), which inevitably (by the course of law of nature) led to **perseverance** and that in return led him to all that which was **good and beneficial** for him.

“Verily, the most honorable of you with Allaah is that (believer) who has at-Taqwaa. Verily, Allaah is All-Knowing, All-Aware.” ^[5]

2. Secondly, in simple words of Rasool Allaah (sallallaahu ‘alai wa sallam), without requiring further elaboration, it reminds us to know that: “You will never leave something for the sake of Allaah, but Allaah will give you something better in return.” ^[6]

Hence, the drier the weather endured, the more pleasant the smell of earth after it has rained!

Citations:

- [1] Based on the narration by ibn Rajab.
- [2] Hadith reported by Abu Dawud (4681). And classed as saheeh, by al-Albaani (may Allaah bestow mercy on his soul)
- [3] Interpretation of the meaning of Surah al-Baqarah 2:54
- [4] Hadith reported by Muslim (2999)
- [5] Interpretation of the meaning of Surah al-Hujuraat 49:13
- [6] Musnad Al Imam Ahmad (5 / 363). And classed as saheeh by al-Albaani

Ten Things that Result in Allah's Love

Ibn al-Qayyim mentioned ten causes that result in Allah’s love for a slave and the slave’s love for His Lord.

First, reciting the Qur’aan while pondering over its meaning and what is meant by it.

Second, getting closer to Allah by performing voluntary deeds after completing the obligatory deeds. This is as in the Hadeeth al-Qudsi: “My slave continues getting closer to Me by performing voluntary deeds until I love him.” [Saheeh Bukharee]

Third, continual remembrance of Allah under all circumstances, with one’s tongue, heart and actions.

Fourth, giving precedence to what He loves over what you love when you are overtaken by your desires.

Fifth, the heart being avid of Allah’s Names, Attributes and the heart roaming in that garden of knowledge

Contributed by
KHANSA QADEER

Class of 2014
Shifa College of Medicine

Goodness to Parents

Sixth, observing Allah's kindness, goodness and bounties, both apparent and hidden

Seventh, and this is the most wonderful: the heart becoming soft, subdued and meek before Allah

Eight, being alone with Allah during the time when the Lord descends during the last portion of the night while reading His Book and ending by asking for forgiveness and repenting.

Ninth, sitting with the beloved and sincere, benefiting from the most fruitful of their speech. And not to speak unless speaking is more beneficial and you know that it will improve your state and be beneficial to others.

Tenth, staying away from every cause that comes between the heart and Allah.

These ten causes take the lovers to the station of true love and bring them to their Beloved.

[Ibn al-Qayyim, Madaarij-us-Saalikeen, vol. 3, pp.17, 18]

In the city of Makkah lives a young man who has not yet seen twenty summers. He is short and well-built and has a heavy crop of hair. People compare him to a young lion. He comes from a rich and noble family. He is very attached to his parents and is particularly fond of his mother. People recognize him as a serious and intelligent young man. He finds no satisfaction in the religion and way of life of his people, their corrupt beliefs and disagreeable practices. His name is Sa'ad ibn Abi Waqqas.

He is a youth, just like you and I, but his resolve and faith is unshakeable! It does not waver, even in the face of opposition from his beloved mother.

While the Prophet was delighted with Sa'ad's acceptance of Islam, others including and especially his mother were not. Sa'ad relates: "When my mother heard the news of my Islam, she flew into a rage. She came up to me and said: 'O Sa'ad! What is this religion that you have embraced which has taken you away from the religion of your mother and father...? By God, either you forsake your new religion or I would not eat or drink until I die.

Your heart would be broken with grief for me and remorse would consume you on account of the deed, you have done and people would censure you forever more.'

'Don't do (such a thing), my mother,' I said, 'for I would not give up my religion for anything.' However, she went on with her threat... For days she neither ate nor drank. She became emaciated and weak."

"Hour after hour, I went to her asking whether I should bring her some food or something to drink but she persistently refused, insisting that she would neither eat nor drink until she died or I abandoned my religion. I said to her, 'Yaa Ummaah! In spite of my strong love for you, my love for Allah and His Messenger is indeed stronger. By Allah, if you had a thousand souls and each one depart one after another, I would not abandon this religion for anything,'

When she saw that I was determined she relented unwillingly and ate and drank. It was concerning Sa'ad's relationship with his mother and her attempt to force him to recant his faith that the words of the Qur'aan were revealed: "And we enjoined on man to be good to his parents. In pain upon pain did his mother bear him and his weaning took two years. So show gratitude to Me and to your parents. To Me is the final destiny. But if they strive to make you join in worship with Me things of which you have no knowledge, obey them not. But behave with them in the world kindly, and follow the path of him who turns to Me in repentance and obedience. Then to Me will be your return, and I shall tell you what you used to do." [Soorah Luqman (31): 14-15]

Source: Al-Hudaa (Guidance) [vol. 1, no.12 (1414H)]

THE 250 MILES Journey

ABID P. AKHTER

About a distance of 5 kilometers from Mangla Dam, the second biggest dam in Pakistan, is the village of Ladhar Manara on Mangla Road. This leads on to the town of Dina on the Grand Trunk Road which is part of the renowned Silk Road of Asia. Lying 70 km to the north of Ladhar is Islamabad International Airport. At the tender age of 10, on 23rd April 1977, I started my journey to a different country; almost a different world. After an eight hour flight, that began with the Islamabad International Airport, I landed at one of the world's busiest airports: Heathrow. That is located in one of the world's most advanced cities; London.

Having spent the first ten years of my life in a typical Pakistan village, disembarking in London was a stark contrast to what I was used to. I had never sat in a car before or used a telephone or seen a toaster or ever used an English style w.c. I remember staring at the black legs of the white lady at the immigration counter and thinking how strange this country and its people are. It was only later that I realized that this odd lady was wearing black stockings on her white legs. The next 8 years of my life revolved around school, friends and helping dad in the shop. In the prime of my youth, I got involved with things that most of the western youth indulge in. Discos, parties, music were the main forms of entertainment for me and my peers. There was even talk of forming a DJ Band named Nirvana. Life of partying, music and dancing seemed to offer a charming way of spending life. When I had somehow managed to scrap a few grades in O-levels and

obtain
ad-

mission in Tottenham College for A-levels, I began to wonder. I started to ask those big and important questions which most sensible people ask themselves in life. 'What am I doing here? What is the purpose of life? Where did I and all humans come from? Which is the true religion?' I figured life could not just be about partying, dancing and music. It had to be more than that. There must be a higher purpose to it then just seeking pleasure or enjoyment. I couldn't ask my parents about the meaning of life because their knowledge and concerns were limited to business, money, relatives, food, cars, houses and plots. I began to ask all and sundry about the meaning of life, but I discovered that most did not know themselves or were so busy with their matters regarding careers, businesses, education that they could not give a thought to these crucial questions.

I rejected my own religion Islam as not being able to provide answers because of the way I had seen my parents and most of my relatives practice, or more accurately not practice it. The Islam I had seen up until then consisted of praying over food on Thursdays (khatam), lighting fireworks on Shab-e-Qadr, going to prayers every Friday, visiting some shrine to cure a serious illness and occasionally reading the Qur'an in the morning. The thing which angered me was why my mother was reading a book everyday, for around half an hour in the morning, which she herself did not understand? And why did she make me do the same? Up till the age of sixteen I read the Qur'an just to please my mum. But now I decided I would not continue to do so as it made no sense to me and I could not see any benefits. I

had never seen anyone in my house or extended family pray five times a day so prayers were not that important. The only thing I did was attend the Friday prayer and even that wasn't regular. So I decided that I would stop practicing what little of Islam I was practicing because it was beyond my scope of understanding.

The Rat Race

With Islam having been pushed aside I decided to look towards other viable options. The obvious one was Christianity. One day while going in the back yard of our shop I found a box with a dozen books on Christianity. Was this a sign from above I asked myself? I read them and they offered some solace to me. Some days afterwards I bumped into a former school fellow named Grant. He seemed to have transformed since his school days.

He talked of the 'spirit'

One of the good things about the British is their habit of reading. You will see them reading...even while walking. I find it ironic that the world's most illiterate people are from a community whose holy book's first command was 'Read'.

and about being 'reborn'. He was very enthusiastic about his religion and invited me to visit his Church. I thought this was another sign from above. But before the visit could materialize my mother decided it was time we revisited our homeland near Mangla Dam as it had been 10 years since we had left. I had by now completed my A-Levels in Sociology, Government, Politics and Economics. I decided it would be a good time to take a year out from studies before starting university. This turned out in hindsight, to be one of the most important and best decisions of my life. One of the biggest chains of Shaytan on modern man is that of 'busy-ness'. He has stolen the most valuable resources from you by keeping you in a never ending rat race.

'The biggest problem with the rat race is that even if you win you are still a rat,' is a humorous but true quote. From the time you begin to stand on your own feet, you are pushed into an endless cycle that begins with studies, spans onto a career, then to marriage, to building a home and then raising your own family and so on. It is a shocking fact that in modern times an individual hardly has any time to think about the direction of his life. He is so busy turning the wheel to pass one stage and get to the next till the point that he has no idea where he is going, until it is too late. It is like a motorist whose car is running low on fuel saying 'I have no time for a refill.'

'Rivalry and worldly gains distract you until you reach the graves,' the Qur'an reminds us. That is why I would suggest a complete time-out of six-months to a year to everyone, especially the youth. Just for the purpose of focusing on the path that brings meaning to one's life.

Mahatma Gandhi

I went to the biggest bookshop in central London and bought the Bible, the Bagahvada Gita, a book on Mahatma Gandhi and a host of other books to take with me to Pakistan. One of the good things about the British is their habit of reading. You will see them reading in coffee shops, on buses, on the underground and even while walking. I find it ironic that the world's most illiterate people are from a community whose holy book's first command was 'Read'. I couldn't make any sense of the Gita and so that was Hinduism out of the way. I mean if the most important holy text couldn't communicate its message to a fairly intelligent and literate mind how could it be a book of guidance for all human beings? I went to the Bible next. There were some beautiful anecdotes and stories but again it seemed to be a jumble of narrations which didn't offer a clear cut message for the reader. The many contradictions and anomalies didn't make matters any easier. Worse still, I learned that there were estimated 50 or more versions of the Bible containing major differ-

ences in theology. So now I decided that the traditional religions didn't have much to offer so the answer must lie elsewhere. I read about the life of Gandhi and it seemed to offer some hope. I then assumed that the meaning of life lay in doing good and helping people, irrespective of religion and decided to read more biographies of famous men of history.

With this new aim in mind while on a trip to the hill station of Muree, I decided to take a look in one of the tiny bookshops on Mall Road. As I entered the shop my eyes rested upon a blue coloured book entitled, Muhammad: His Life Based on The Earliest Sources by Martin Lings. I read the back leaf and learned that it was an award winner from the late General Zia-ul-Haq, the much maligned and favored target of liberals. This was the first time I had seen a book by an Englishman on Islam. I decided to purchase the book as I didn't know anything about Muhammad SAW except that you were supposed to kiss your hands and rub your eyes after hearing his name. I read the entire book and it was an eye-opener. I would advise everyone, especially the youth to read the biography of the Holy Prophet (SAW) thoroughly before they delve into books or fall into the clutches of some organisation or scholar if they want to get a sound and balanced understanding of the Sunnah and overall, Islam. It is imperative to get a solid foundation in the Qur'an and Sunnah before occupying yourself with other books and information, otherwise you may be easy pickings for Shaytan. One of my teachers told me something that all Muslims should ponder over; that Lawrence of Arabia before being sent to Arabia on his spying mission read the biography of the Holy Prophet (SAW) not once, twice, thrice, but eight times! How many times have we read about his life, character and conduct? While reading the biography I particularly remember the incident of the Holy Prophet's (SAW) death and the words of Hazrat Abu-Bakr (RA) to calm the Muslims. 'Whoever worshiped Muhammad SAW know that he is dead, and whoever worshiped Allah (SWT) know

that He is alive and never dies." These words were stuck in my mind like superglue because up until this time in my family and village the belief which was propounded more than anything else was that the Holy Prophet SAW was made of light

and superhuman.

This was the first time that I realised that the Islam which I had been taught and seen in

practice up until now was not necessarily the real Islam. So now I decided that maybe I needed to re-examine Islam itself.

It was also at this time that I became aware about the one definite thing about life- its antonym- death. Up until this time I had never given thought to the fact that this life would end. I was concerned, like a majority of people, with living, eating, studying, sports, movies and partying. I never considered that one day this life would end and that death could come at anytime. I was residing at my Grandfather's in an idyllic village located beside Mangla Canal named Ali-Baig, when at night my Mother asked me to massage my grandfather's feet and legs because he was tired. Although he was in his sixties, he looked after our Grandmother who was suffering from a chronic disease and was unable to care for herself. In fact, the prospect of her death hung thick in the air. I shrugged off the idea by saying I'll do it tomorrow. Grandfather's massage could never take place, because the next day we received the shocking news of his passing away. This made me realise that death never comes with a warning. I also came to the realization that we should never delay in doing good deeds because we may never get a second chance. Waiting for our grandmother to pass on, it was our grandfather who embraced death.

I would advise everyone, especially the youth to read the biography of the Holy Prophet (SAW) thoroughly before they delve into books or fall into the clutches of some organisation or scholar.

A few weeks later, grandmother also passed away. I was reminded again of the one reality which no person, even an atheist, can deny.

In the West and now increasingly in the east, death is pushed in the background so that most people don't see it, don't think about it and don't discuss it. Most people who die, do so in hospitals and from there they are taken in hearses to mortuaries where they are cremated or buried without anyone but the gravedigger coming face to face with the corpse. So the most important reality is conveniently buried under the carpet or the ground!

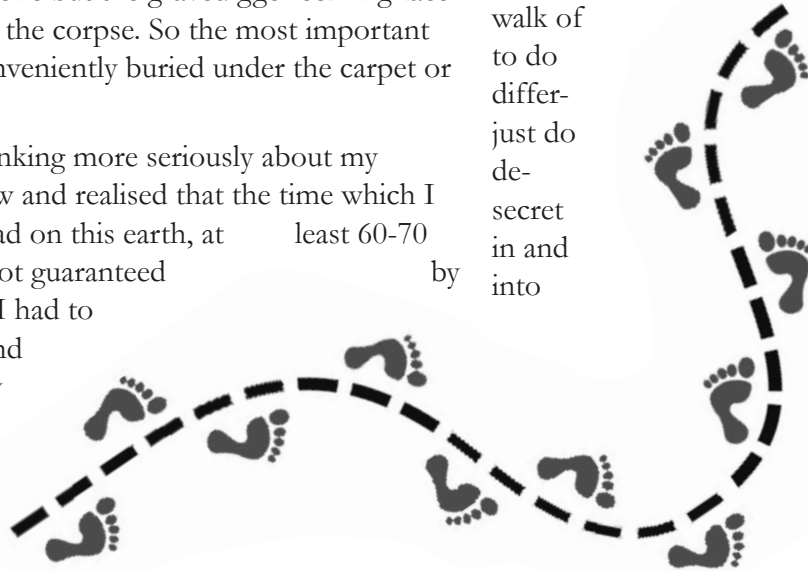
I started thinking more seriously about my purpose now and realised that the time which I thought I had on this earth, at least 60-70 years, was not guaranteed by any means. I had to be urgent and brutal in my search for the meaning of life or truth. I couldn't take anything for granted. I had to try extra hard.

The 250 Mile Walk

But my search for truth couldn't continue in Pakistan because it was time to return to the UK to resume my studies. I returned in the month of August 1988. I still had one month to go before the commencement of the first term. Up until this time I had just been self-centered, more concerned about my life, my friends, my education, my future. I continually asked myself whether I had done any good in the world.

An opportunity to reform presented itself as an advertisement in one of the local newspapers. A Muslim charity organisation was planning a walk in an attempt to raise funds for orphans in Africa. It was to be a 250 mile walk from

Bradford to London. It was a two week event comprising of a daily walk of around 25 miles and a stopover in certain towns for the night. I decided at once to volunteer. Shaytan did try to dissuade me by giving half a dozen justifications as to why it wasn't necessary to go, but in my zeal I ignored them all and packed my walking boots and headed for Bradford. 'Strike while the iron is hot', as they say. That was to be the longest and most significant walk of my life. If you plan to do something big or different for the good, just do it. Don't think or de- secret lay otherwise the whisperer will step in and into throw your plans disarray.



The walk being organised by a Muslim charity, members of which arranged for us (i.e. the dozen or so young, mostly Asian volunteers) to spend the nights in the Masjids of the towns we were to stay at. Each evening we would be collected by the Masjid committee and be given a tremendous welcome by the local Muslims. We prayed, slept, woke, ate together, often from the same dish (which seemed unhygienic at first). This was the first time I had been inside a truly Islamic environment. I was surrounded by practicing Muslims, who read the Qur'an with devotion, offered their prayers on time and spread the wonderful feeling of brotherhood. This was an Islam I had never seen before in my life. This was when I understood what being a Muslim truly meant. I could now grasp the true meaning of complete submission to the will of Allah (SWT). I understood that Islam was not the name of a set of rituals or a series of dos and don'ts but was a complete way of life based on total surrender.

The other participants and I had a very superficial understanding of Islam. We were surprised, and at times shocked at the seriousness and zealotry of some of the brothers who joined us along that walk. Our innocent and sometimes difficult queries were handled very wisely by the people we came across, especially by the Arab brothers. They did not get angry at the questions on our young and foolish minds. They managed to give logical and satisfactory replies to our concerns and misunderstandings. I remember in particular brother Abdul-Raheem Greene (of Peace TV) who joined us for part of the journey. When he saw me and the other youth who were Muslims since birth having a very carefree attitude towards Islam and its teachings, he would give us a very stern lecture. Even though many felt that he was being very extreme at that time, I for one had other thoughts. It was strange knowing that here is a person from a complete non-Muslim background with very little exposure to Islam; but who has knowledge and is devoted to this religion, more than one who has been a Muslim since birth?

End of The Road

The two weeks whizzed by and we reached the end of the road not only of the charity walk but also of my old life. We had managed to raise, by the help of Allah (SWT), around £50,000; a huge amount in those days. I felt for the very first time that I had accomplished some good in life; something to be proud of. I had finally opened my eyes to see the beauty Islam creates in the life of those who practice it. God had answered my questions and had shown me the true path. I decided, at this moment, at the end, that I would give up my philandering ways and try my best to live as my Creator has ordained. I had found the answer to my questions.

I did two crucial things which have helped me tremendously in my quest to live as a Muslim. One, I made a commitment to myself and to

Allah (SWT) that I would never miss a prayer in my life until death. Second, I would read the Qur'an. So the first thing I did after the walk was to purchase a Qur'an with an English translation and read it from cover to cover. And I have been reading it and studying it until now and it never ceases to amaze me. It is my firm belief that if all Muslims in the world read the Qur'an with the intent to extract its meaning a majority of our problems would disappear and peace would prevail in the hearts and minds of millions across the globe.

May Allah (SWT) accept our efforts for Islam. Ameen.

"A man follows his friend's religion; you should be careful who you make friends with." At-Tirmidhi

DR ARSHAD JAVED

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I could never have imagined myself as a full time faculty member in a medical college teaching pre-clinical years' students. I had set out to be a Pediatrician, but ended up learning surgery, training to become a surgeon, doing my post graduation and practicing the art. I enjoyed it thoroughly. I did teach students from clinical years, house surgeons and post graduate trainees, but teaching in a medical college was never on the agenda. To me, Surgery was the ultimate thing. How I became a teacher is another story. I would say it was Allah's doing. We forget that Allah is the Provider, and Allah makes us to be at places our rizq has been placed.

Teaching brought a totally new dimension to my life. It has taught me a lot about myself. I have discovered more about myself, and, I dare say, more than my years as a surgeon. I have learned about the best and worst of human attitudes-experiencing them to the full. But more than that, it has extended my family. In my years as a teacher, the number of my children has increased exponentially. At least a 100 are added per year. My concern for their welfare brings mixed responses. With an increasing number of children believing that the teacher is no more than an employee of the college being paid from 'their' money, this relationship has suffered wide cracks. Fortunately, this is not what this article is about. It is about the favorite daughter that I 'acquired' in my years as a teacher.

Fatima [this is not her real name] got my attention when she pointed out during my lecture that I had misquoted a fact. I went over to her and found her source of information to be an old edition of 'Gray's' I was clearly impressed by her desire to learn and the courage to stand up to a teacher in order to right a wrong [once she

daughter

stood up to General Musharraf in a Students' Convention, as he had made a derogatory remark about Islam]. In the years that followed, I learned that she was a truly courageous child in more ways than one.

It was not until the end of 1st year [hers] that I got to know more about her. I found out that she had a great interest in literature, and was a poetess. As time went by, I found her personality had many facets. She was a writer, orator, debater, compere and an avid student of religion. She was compere at the Convocation ceremony and that was the first I saw her speak publicly. She did so with aplomb, grace and confidence in front of a large audience.

When she had told me about her family life I was struck with awe, admiration and respect for her. Her family had lived in the UAE for some years and had seen good days. A quirk of fate dislocated them and they had to return. This is when the hard times began. I never asked about the details. Meeting me in the corridors or the office, she would talk to me about whatever she felt like to ease her burden. On many occasions her facial muscles would go taut and she would stop in mid-sentence.

Once she told me that she had topped the entrance test for the College, but did not have the required finances. The high-ups waived her fees- her negotiating talents also had a part to play in that. What she told next hit me like a thunderbolt. After reaching home, she would teach 12 to 15 students to help keep her family going and meet her personal expenses. To save money on public transport, she used to walk about 3-4 kilometers to catch a 'wagon'. It would be an understatement to say I was stunned. The emotion can't be put into words. Her father was not earning enough, and she took it upon herself to do whatever she could, being the eldest of four children. Her brothers were much younger. Adversity brought out the best in her.

All this never affected her academics. Though she was never a 'topper', but still she scored

well in all her exams. She had good comprehension of the subjects. She dressed modestly, always in a scarf and abaya. Seldom would you find her giggling about. She carried herself with an aura of respectability. When she went to 3rd year, she asked me select a stethoscope for her, and to me it was a great honor. The other honor, and a bigger one was that I was 'baba' to her and not 'sir'. Once I told her that I had only one daughter. She took offence to this, enquiring whether she was not my daughter too! Some years later, at her marriage, her father introduced me to her relatives saying that she was my daughter. That was overwhelming.

I shifted to Shifa College of Medicine when she was in her 3rd year. To my misfortune, I missed her Graduation Day and could not see her wearing the Graduation robes. Once she was done with her House Job, she joined Shifa Hospital as a Medical Officer in Surgery. Her work got appreciation by all those who came in contact with her. Her intensity of involvement affected her health adversely. A Visiting Professor of Surgery was so impressed by the quality of her work and knowledge that he would insist on having her as his assistant for surgical procedures. Once she had done Part 1 of her Surgery Fellowship exam, she was asked by the same Professor to join his unit for postgraduate training. She is now a PG trainee on her way to realize her cherished dream. She is trying hard to balance the demands of married life and surgical training.

Fatima has been a source of immense inspiration for me, and I am sure for many others too but she is not the only student who has inspired me. I have come across many courageous ones who faced adversity with courage, be it a broken family or discordant parents. To close this narrative, I hope my readers find it beneficial and are able to draw their own conclusions. I am not ending this narrative by citing any morals that could be derived from it. Allah (SWT) keep all of us steadfast during trials and tribulations. Ameen.

A QUARTER Too Much Change

Brothers and sisters in Islam,

Several years ago, an Imam from out-of-state accepted a call to a Mosque in Houston, Texas. Some weeks after he arrived he had an occasion to ride the bus from his home to the downtown area. When he sat down, he discovered that the driver had accidentally given him a quarter too much change. As he considered what to do, he thought to himself, 'You'd better give the quarter back. It would be wrong to keep it.' Then he thought, 'Oh, forget it, it's only a quarter. Who would worry about this little amount? Anyway, the bus company gets too much fare; they will never miss it. Accept it as a 'gift from AL-LAH' and keep quiet.'

When his stop came, he paused momentarily at the door, and then he handed the quarter to the driver and said, 'Here, you gave me too much change.' The driver, with a smile, replied, 'Aren't you the new Imam in town?'

'Yes' he replied.

'Well, I have been thinking a lot lately about going somewhere to worship. I just wanted to see what you would do if I gave you too much change. I'll see you at the mosque.'

When the preacher stepped off the bus, he literally grabbed the nearest light pole, held on, and said, 'Oh ALLAH, I almost sold you for a quarter.'

Our lives are the only Quran some people will ever read. This is a disturbing example of how much people watch us as Muslims, and will put us to the test! Always be on guard -- and remember -- You carry your IMAN on your shoulders when you call yourself 'Muslim.'

Watch your thoughts; they become words.

Watch your words; they become actions.

Watch your actions; they become habits.

Watch your habits; they become character.

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.



Theme SIST 2013: **Six Feet Below and Beyond**

It was a heavenly day. The deep blue azure stretched as far as my sight could see. A light breeze blew through the tall pine trees, singing the song of nature. The flowers below were a blaze of colour: ivory hues melting into the most beautiful reds and oranges. A mansion, resplendent with architectural finery, stood amidst the pines. Gazing from the window, I beheld the spectacle in wonder. I wanted to rush out and enter the house- MY house. I tried moving but realized I could not go beyond the window where I stood. I clutched the windowsill, waiting in anticipation for the time when I know all barriers would come down and I would be able to cross over to this wonderland...

-- A glimpse into Jannah

It is narrated that after a believer dies, two angels come to him and question him about his faith. He will be asked about his deity, the man named Muhammad (SAW) and who he used to worship. If he answers correctly, his grave will be made spacious and comfortable. A window will open for him and he will be shown his place in Jannah. Allah (SWT) will say, "My servant has spoken the truth, so spread out carpets from the Garden for him and open a gate of the Garden for him."

Death is a mystery for the living. It has baffled mankind since times immemorial. It astonishes us, scares us, send chills down our spines. People who have near-death experiences often describe a bright light, emanating forth from a tunnel, while others claim to have symbolic dreams signifying a life after death. Death is an elusive concept especially when set against the pomp and glitter of this world. Having laboured all our lives to establish for ourselves a decent living, spending our free time partying with friends, struggling to be good in our career, and making the most of our finite lives as it is, the prospect of all this ending and moving onto a next life is daunting.

Nevertheless, everything has to come to an end: it is an irrefutable reality. But it gives rise to some BIG questions. Who created us and who set time into motion? Where do we come from and where do we go? What is the purpose of our life here?

Let's take the worldly perspective. A person has been a shoemaker all his life. He mended shoes day in and day out to provide food for his family. He neither got to publish scores of research articles, nor was he able to afford posh tours around the world. His achievement in life: nil. On the other hand is a Harvard graduate. He works hard to become a world renowned entrepreneur; give in 100 hours of work every week to beef up his bank balance. Achievements in life: multiple. Our criteria for achievement depend on how much money a person makes or what status he enjoys in the society. But the irony is that this worldly success does not provide him with contentment because he digresses from his true purpose. At the close of his sixth or seventh decade, when his bones have gone weak and body fragile, he is left with unfilled voids and empty souls. The true quest has still not begun.

We have indeed created man in the best shape. We then turned him towards all the lowest of the low states. (95: 4-5)

Fortunately for us, Islam defines real success for us in just one divine concept: the Day of Judgment and the Akhira. It would be such a time when Harvard degrees or shoemaking skills lose value and what would matter are the deeds that we sent forth during our lives. The importance of Akhira could be judged from the fact that the Quran and the Sunnah are replete with descriptions of the life to come. In fact, when Hazrat Muhammad (SAW) started upon his prophetic mission, the first 11 years of his preaching were dedicated solely to the Day of Judgment and the Hereafter. Moreover, the word death and its derivatives are used more than 160 times in the Quran. It is a bitter reality that despite its significance, we have forgotten this basic teaching. Our lives are heedless of our true purpose, and it is only when we are in the throes of death that we realize how ill-spent our years have been.

This is what our finish line is, where it all comes down to: *Six Feet Below and Beyond*. The message has been conveyed to us. It is up to us now whether we embrace it or let it slip by. It is time to evaluate where our real success lies. It is time for submission to the One so that our voids can be filled and we are able to achieve everlasting success. Thus, join us at SIST 2013 on a mission to improve our Eman, perfect our belief in Allah subhanahu wata'ala and the Akhira, and rise together to live up to our identity as true "Muslims".